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Avonie. Brown

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LINKS AND LINEAGE:

THE LIFE AND WORK OF MARY ANN SHADD IN MEDIA,
A BLACK FEMINIST ANALYSIS

by

Avonie Brown

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Communication Studies in
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1994
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ABSTRACT

LINKS AND LINEAGE:
THE LIFE AND WORK OF MARY ANN SHADD IN MEDIA,
A BLACK FEMINIST ANALYSIS

Accepting historical documentation as an inherently subjective and selective process, this thesis will continue the process of reconstructing and highlighting the importance of the Black Canadian historical presence. This thesis will attempt to widen Canadian mass communication and historical vision by focusing on the advocacy of Mary Ann Shadd: teacher, abolitionist, fighter for women’s rights and the first Black woman in North America and the first woman in Canada to found and edit a newspaper. Using a Black feminist epistemological framework this thesis will advance an analysis of her multiple roles, focusing on her media participation and its implications for African-Canadian, women’s and mass communication history. How did the complex interconnectedness of race, gender and class impact her activism as a Black woman in the struggle for civil rights in Canada? How did this fundamental reality define the aesthetic and content of her work as writer and editor of the Provincial Freeman?
DEDICATION

To my mother, Joyce Mae Ladrick
for loving me, trusting me, and giving me the freedom to
explore the full range of my voice;

and

To the memory of my Grandmother,
Emlyn Louise Boswell-Ladrick
(February 26, 1926-January 10, 1992)

Remembering my Grandmother connects me to the human
continuum that endures amidst change. She reminds me
that I'm not only myself, spawned and existing in the
present, but one link in the chain of ongoing
generations.

Robin Reif

▼
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has been a "long time comin’" and many people have shared in my graduate experiences; I thank each and everyone one of you for caring, sharing and praying.

I must first give thanks to God, whose power and creative intelligence directs me.

I cannot begin to express my gratitude to my Chair, Dr Christopher King, not only for his immense contribution to the quality of my thesis, but also for his exceptional patience and understanding. His commitment to good scholarship kept me focused and challenged. Moreover, his humour, music and coffee were personal touches that often made the impossible seem possible.

I am grateful to my Second Reader, Dr Marlene Cuthbert, for readily agreeing to work with me. She was my first link with the Department and in those early days she unknowingly validated my naive and idealistic political voice. Thank you for being a part of this unforgettable experience. I would also like to thank my External Reader, Dr Charlene Gannage, for her participation and for excusing my inattentiveness. Your comments at the defense made my heart soar, thank you.

Several other faculty members in the Department of Communication Studies contributed to my intellectual development: Dr Kai Hildebrandt for his patience and humour through some of the most difficulty times, statistically speaking; Dr Irv Goldman whose theoretical
understanding not only kept me challenged, but made me understand that in a dynamic society epistemological challenges were essential; and to Dr Amir Hassanpour and Dr Shahrzad Mojab for making me realize, by example, that the combination of intellectual rigor and community activism can produce an insurgent political tool.

To the secretaries, Lina Beaudry, and Sheila Labelle I say thank you for helping me negotiate the procedural minefields. I would especially like to pay tribute to Ann Gallant, a secretary by profession but an ‘other mother’ in spirit. She was there to guide me, reassure me, listen to me and make me truly smile; I will always treasure the memories. To the library staff in Interlibrary Loan, Reference and Circulation, your patience and diligence was truly a blessing, thank you very much.

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I must also thank a group of ‘sisters’ and ‘brothers’ who kept me sane from the beginning to the end. Thanks to the ‘bunununus gals’ Jacqueline Russell and Nichelle James, as well as Ava Lew, Chris Gillett and Mourace Scott for being there through what seems like a life time of experiences; Sunjee John and Margaret Parsons your
commitment to community organizing taught me much about myself and my abilities; and to Linda Carty for being a generous friend and role model, thanks for the talks, the escape and the resources.

I say thank you to a special group of high school students in Windsor, because through their own frustrations yet genuine desires to change their future, they challenged my complacency.

For several years I have reserved a special emotional space for ‘the crew’ of Carol Alain, Dionne Falconer, and Angela Robertson. They have been with me through the thick and the thicker and words cannot begin to express my love and appreciation. Their penetrating and uncompromising challenges have forced me to interrogate myself and my choices on an ongoing basis; and the result is an increasingly clearer understanding and self-definition.

I am the product of a community of women who have made it very easy for me to locate my place in the world; they have been the tower of strength, and encouragement that I lean on daily. My Mother, Joyce and my Aunts Salome, Belvinda and Kibibi have never doubted my ability to be all I wanted to be and their unwavering love has made me confident and secure. Finally, to my sister Junelle, I sincerely hope you discover all that you seek and that you will come to truly understand the power of love.

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MARY ANN SHADD: A CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS (1823-1893)

1823  October 9. Mary Ann Camberton Shadd is born in Wilmington, Delaware.

1834  August 1. slavery is abolished in the British Colonies

1839  At 16 Mary Ann opens a school for Black children.

1847  Teaches in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where the family now lives.

1849  Writes first pamphlet, *Hints to the Colored People of the North*.

1850  Fugitive Slave Law is passed; migration of northern Blacks to Canada increases.

1851  January 1. Henry Bibb begins publishing the *Voice of the Fugitive*.

Mary Ann arrives in Toronto and attends September Convention organized by Henry Bibb. After the Convention she moves to the Sandwich/Windsor area.

Establishes an integrated (in theory) school with 13 students during the day and 11 adults at night. School first financed by parents but when fails she seeks and receives funding from the American Missionary Association.

1852  Publishes *A Plea for Emigration: or, Notes of Canada West, in its Moral, Social, and Political Aspect: with Suggestions Respecting Mexico, West Indies, and Vancouver Island, for the Information of Colored Emigrants*. Receives favorable reviews from Henry Bibb.

Father, Abraham Shadd comes to Windsor.

Bibb organizes the Refugee Home Society and Mary Ann is openly critical.

In the June 17 issue of the *Voice of the Fugitive*, Bibb informs the public that Mary Ann receives funding from the AMA. Political feud between the two escalates.
August, Samuel Ward arrives in Windsor, provides opportunity for Mary Ann to discuss a potential newspaper

1853

January 14. Mary Ann is dismissed from her teaching position by the AMA.

March 24. First edition of the Provincial Freeman is produced in Windsor. After its release Mary Ann leaves for a lecture tour to generate interest in the paper.

Henry Bibb's printing press is destroyed by fire.

1854

Mary Ann moves the papers headquarters to Toronto.

March 25. Second issue of the Provincial Freeman is released.

At 39, Bibb dies on Emancipation day only 11 years after gaining his freedom.

August. Amelia Shadd joins the paper as the Canadian Contributor.

October 28. Samuel Ward's name is removed from the masthead of the paper.

1855

Brother Isaac Shadd is now a subscription agent for the New Provincial Freeman and Weekly Advertiser.

June. Amelia marries David T. Williamson.

Public outraged when its realized that the editors are women. Mary Ann forced to take on less controversial position of travelling agent and hires William P Newman.

The paper is relocated to Chatham.

September she attends a National Convention in Philadelphia and is the first Black women admitted as a "corresponding member."

1856

January 3. Mary Ann marries Thomas Cary. Five months later she's back on tour.

May. Mary A. Shadd, Isaac D. Shadd and H. Ford Douglass appear on the masthead of the paper as joint editors.
1857  August 7. Sarah Elizabeth Cary is born.

Mid-September. the last regular issue of the Provincial Freeman is released.

1858  June 28. Isaac mails out an edition of the paper, two days later the office is raided

Abraham D. Shadd is elected to Raleigh Township Commission, the first Black to win elective office in Canada West.

1859  Abraham D. Shadd takes his seat on the Town Council.


1861  Early spring. She gives birth to son, Linton.

1863  Martin Delany hires Mary Ann to assist in recruiting Black men for the Northern army.

1868  July. Mary receives teaching certificate in Detroit.

The 15th Amendment to the American Constitution is passed, granting the right to vote to Black men.

1869  Serves as the Detroit delegate at the Colored Men's Labor Congress

Moves to Washington D.C.

At 46, she is the first woman law student at Howard University. Continues working as a teacher to support her family.

1871  Runs a school for Black children.

Is listed among the senior class of 1871-2 but is not allowed to graduate because she is a woman. However shortly after another woman student, Charlotte E. Ray, is allowed to graduate and is the first Black woman admitted to the Bar. She is able to graduate because she is simply listed by her initials, C.E. Ray. Mary Ann's name is too well known to use a similar strategy. Mary Ann charges the university with sex discrimination.

1872  She begins writing articles for New National Era to disturb the political complacency of Black women.
Isaac is the Speaker of the House of Representatives in the State of Mississippi.

1878  Addresses the national convention of the National Woman Suffrage Association.

1880  Through her affiliation with the Colored Women’s Progressive Franchise Association, Mary Ann tries to establish another paper.

1883  She finally receives her LL.B.

1884  Resigns her teaching position.

1892  December 21. Son Linton dies at 33.

INTRODUCTION

"Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with purpose. It is seeking he who wishes may know the cosmic secrets of the world and they that dwell therein" (Zora Neale Hurston quoted in Walker, 1979: 49).

Exposing Canada's Historical Mythology

Our perception of ourselves and other people is in part a reflection of our historical knowledge. History allows us to discover our world. History "is a compass [we] use to find [ourselves] on the map of human geography. It tells [us] where [we] are, and what [we] are" (John Henry Clarke quoted in Bell, 1986: 30). As in a colonial context where the colonized is taught the history of and by the colonizer, so too has been the experience of Blacks¹ in Canada. Black history has been absent and when present, never fully integrated in Canadian historiography. Consequently Canada remains surrounded by historical mythologies.

Unlike the United States where Blacks have consistently criticized the unfavourable picture painted by the dominant historical tradition, there exists a much more

¹Throughout this thesis 'Black' and 'White' have been intentionally capitalized to represent much more than skin colour. 'Black' is synonymous to African or the term 'people of African descent'; as 'white' is to European or the term 'people of European descent. Each term is used to represent the complex and common culture and experiences shared within each group. However, implicit within each term is the recognition of differences; that is there is an inherent heterogeneity within the cultures of Blackness and Whiteness.
positive historical mythology in Canada. Canada is the 'promised land,' the end of the underground railroad, the promise of 'freedom.' Rarely is Canada's own legacy of the enslavement of the First Nations and Blacks exposed in all its graphic brutality. Fugitive slaves risked their lives to get to Canada, but even in the post-emancipation era Canada had its own experience with 'Jim Crow'. As was frequently cited in the Provincial Freeman, one of two black own anti-slavery newspapers operating in the 1850s, 'Negrophobia/Colourphobia' was a fact of race relations in Canada.

However Canada holds as a beacon its role in the abolitionist movement and the underground railroad but slavery existed in Canada from 1628 - 1833. As Winks points out in The Blacks in Canada, "much of Canada's participation in the abolition movement resulted from geographical proximity rather than from ideological affinity. Negroes fled to Canada...and once there they encountered race and colour prejudice...Free they were but equal they were not" (1971: 270). The overarching implication of this thesis is its challenge of the perpetuation of this historical mythology. By focusing

---

2 In tracing the roots of Jim Crow, some historians believe he was a slave from Ohio or South Carolina; others believe he was a slave owner or that crow came from the simile, black as a crow. However by 1838 Jim Crow represented Blacks but most specifically the Black comedic entertainer. By 1901 Jim Crow became entrenched as an American system of Apartheid that radically, literally and starkly divided America into two worlds, one White, the other 'Coloured' (Bennett, Jr, 1993: 255-296).
this investigation on the life and work of Mary Ann Shadd the fallacies inherent in this myth will be exposed. As an activist for civil rights, Mary Ann’s work was aimed at securing the integration of freed Blacks into a Canadian society ill-prepared and unwilling to accept Blacks as fundamentally free and equal partners.

**Interconnectedness of Variables: Race, Gender and Class**

Sociological research and historical scholarship has made very limited attempts to address the Black experience in the Canadian context. In fact the history of Blacks in Canada when it has been written has been "general" and "sweeping" in approach, denying the complexity of the Black Canadian existence; suggesting that there was no distinct black culture or value system" (Brand, 1991: i; Walker, 1979: 3). The absence or inadequacy of the historical documentation of the Canadian Black experience is even more acutely obvious where Black women’s experiences are concerned. Black history is in fact limited to the experience of Black men thus creating a complete subordination of gender definitions by race (Brand, 1991: 12).

The absence of women’s experiences and specifically Black women’s experiences, is a result of the dominant patriarchal ideology which is steadfastly opposed to fundamental differences; it is racist, sexist, homophobic and built on oppression and economic exploitation. In this
dominant hegemony whiteness privileges blackness, maleness privileges femaleness and wealth privileges poverty. It stands to reason then that a Black, female living in poverty uniquely experiences "the simultaneity of these oppressions"; her life is oppressively defined by its "multiplicative nature": race x gender x class (James & Busia, 1993: 16). This thesis will historically position the life of a Black woman, placing her at the centre of analysis. By so doing I intend to expose her vitality and to eschew the 'victim mentality' of much feminist scholarship.

Feminist researchers have not significant altered the omission of Black women from Canadian history. A literature review of writings by women about Canadian women’s history consistently relegated Black women to the status of a category/variable, a footnote..."the 'add on' theory" (Brand, 1991: 12; Carty, 1993: 9).

Racist ideology, again where Whiteness privileges Blackness, has created the invisible women within 'feminist' discourse. In 1851 Sojourner Truth was compelled to ask the question ‘Ain’t I a Woman?’; then and now the dominant culture eliminates Black women from their social construction of ‘true womanhood.’ Black women are relegated to a peripheral reality where all women are White. This privilege of Whiteness views White women as the totality, the norm, as it subsumes all other women simple to the status as ‘other’ (Carty, 1993: 10). This
thesis is my commitment to resisting this culture of manipulated exclusion, to expand our understanding of the true diversity of womanhood.

Integrated in History: Black Women, the Historical Subject

History has at times acknowledged diversity among women but it has been cursory and superficial. This limited inclusion of ‘other’ women in the history of women in Canada is also problematic because it avoids real challenges. That is, while diversity is recognized it is often static; diversity is not interactive. Very few works that propose to investigate the lives of women focus on exploring the varying relationships between different groups of Canadian women. Most fail to "to construct an integrated analysis, one which is more representative of the changing Canadian social structure" (Carty, 1993: 9). The reality is that the stories of Black, First Nations, Arab, Latina and Asian women are not woven into the fabric that is Canadian women’s history. Instead each represents a highlight, silenced until her turn to shine in the spotlight. Such recognition and highlight reaffirms traditional perspectives. This reductionist view does not

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3There have been some exceptions. One example is, Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society which explores how White women benefited and contributed to the racist practices against the First Nations.
allow women of Colour\textsuperscript{4} full interaction or interplay throughout the historical discourse (Brown, 1991: 86).

More and more Black women have begun the process of exploring and exposing over 200 years of the culture of Black women in Canada. Although in its formative stage this process is interactive. It does not isolate the experience of Black women in a sterile Black world but situates them in a race, gender and class conscious society. In exploring the individual history of Mary Ann Shadd, educator, political activist, suffragette, and editor, I will situate Black women's experience in the totality of Canadian women's history. It is only through the active awareness of the complexity and interactive nature of women's experiences as defined by gender, race and class inequities that the mythology of the dominant hegemony can be radically contested.

Reclaiming the Historical Legacy

The historical icons that have defined my Canadian education never included images of Black men or women. Instead White men's, and to a lesser degree, White women's experiences were presented as normative. The strategy of

\textsuperscript{4}For me the term is in itself reductionist because it still implies an oppositional identity, White women versus other women. But Dr Carty suggests that, "usage of the term 'women of Colour' acknowledges our ethnic differences, which is why Colour is capitalized, denoting more than skin colour. It indicates a common context, grounded in shared systemic discrimination" (Carty, 1993: 20).
exclusion reenforces Black women's marginalized status in the dominant society. The struggle for inclusion then, is ultimately a struggle for self-determination.

For Black women as well as Black men, it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others—for their use and to our detriment. The development of a self-defined Black woman ready to explore and pursue our own power and interests within our communities, is vital in the war for Black liberation...For it is through the coming together of self-actualized individuals, female and male that any real advances can be made (Lorde, 1984: 45-46).

Any Black self-definition is a direct challenge to popular definitions of Black reality and experiences.

One serious obstacle encountered by Black feminists today is the public (read White) perception that the publicly vocal Black woman is an anomaly, an exception. The works of and by Black women are often

...received as if [they] emerged from nowhere, as if each of us had lived, thought, and worked without any historical past or contextual present. This is one of the ways in which [Black] women's work and thinking has been made to seem sporadic, errant, orphaned of any tradition of its own (Rich, 1979: 11).

Neither Canadian women's history nor Canadian mass communications history includes a significant analysis of Mary Ann Shadd and her active participation in and use of the newspaper as a political tool. In communication literature and academic departments Black Canadians are not exposed as active agents helping to shape Canada's media environment. Instead, Blacks in Canada have been limited to the conclusions of effects theory and uses and
gratification studies borrowed from the United States with sweeping generalizations made about our 'sameness.' In fact, to the best of my knowledge no significant study has been done on Black media participation in Canada. It is my intention with this thesis to correct this omission by directly focusing on the impact which The Provincial Freeman, under the editorship of Mary Ann Shadd, had on nineteenth century Canada.

Implications

Therefore, the historical excavation of the lives of Black women in Canada has several implications. Not only does it challenge historical mythologies and correct absences, but of primary importance is the call for theoretical reassessment and recovery within feminist discourse. While traditional feminists have advocated a transformation of the social structure and a movement "beyond the realm of radical rhetoric" they have not bridged the gaps among women created by racist, classicist and sexist socialization (hooks, 1981: 121,157).

The process of creating sisterhood in action, not merely by words, is a two-step and interactive process. On

5"Effects studies can actually be seen as content studies. The causal agent is seen as some unit of content and the effect as a result of exposure to content...Uses and gratification considers the characteristic purposes individuals have for attending the media and other activities...the purpose of the audience is the central issue" (Anderson, 1987, 8, 36, 39).
the one hand White feminists must realize that most often they operate from a base of unacknowledged privilege where the 'privilege' of whiteness not only protects but "confers dominance, gives permission to control" (McIntosh, 1990: 4,12). However, refusing to acknowledge and relinquish privilege and power is resisting the inevitable change taking place (Carty, 1993: 14). Black women, indeed women of all identities, are breaking the silence and are redefining their experiences, their histories, creating new realities that speak to the truth of sisterhood. Central to the process is the fusion of theory and praxis, i.e., action.

The process begins with [and will only succeed] with action, with the individual woman's refusal to accept any set of myths, stereotypes, and false assumptions that deny the shared commonness of her human experience; that deny her capacity to experience the Unity of all life...that deny her ability to change (hooks, 1981: 157).

The latter, taking action, giving voice to Black women's experiences, is my preoccupation in this thesis; presenting one voice, Mary Ann Shadd's, in a dialogue among people who had been silenced. The second and equally significant preoccupation in this thesis appears in the statement, "if we don't keep in touch with the ancestors we are in fact lost" (Evans, 1984: 344). It is not simply 'history as therapy' or 'feel good' history. Exploring the historical past of Black Canadians not only corrects my miseducation but provides a source of information for better understanding, appreciation and affirmation of
present realities. As Frantz Fanon points out, the historical is ultimately a quest for self-determination, a quest for a "national culture," a need to find "anchorage" among African people everywhere (Fanon, 1963: 206 - 218). Ralph Ellison was equally eloquent when he said:

I have to affirm my forefathers [my foremothers]...I am forced to look at these people...and conclude that there is another reality behind the appearance or reality which they would force upon us as truth. Any people who could endure all of that brutalization and keep together, who could undergo such dismemberment and resuscitate itself, and endure, until it could take the initiative in achieving its own freedom is obviously more than the sum of its brutalization. Seen in this perspective, theirs has been one of the great human experiences and one of the great triumphs of the human spirit in modern times ("'A very Stern Discipline': An Interview with Ralph Ellison," Harper's 234 (March 1967): 76, 83-84. Quoted in Novick, 1988: 483).

Mary Ann Shadd exemplifies one of those great human experiences and spirits. The central issue of this thesis is the historical documentation and analysis of the life and work of Mary Ann Shadd. I will explore her participation in the struggle to end racial oppression with particular reference to her writings in the Provincial Freeman.

My research and personal commitment to Black women's history has an inherent bias. On the one hand I am the researcher charged with the task of uncovering historical facts; while on the other hand I hold membership in the group under investigation.

Some may critique then my ability to objectively and
impartially evaluate Black women's history in Canada and might even insist that my personal experiences of growing up Black in Canada may "dilute" my critical judgement. I accept that because of my lived experiences, my choices and interpretations will be biased. We are all products of our socialization and bring all our conscious and unconscious biases to all we do. More importantly, I believe that there is an inherent element of subjectivity/bias in all research.

Patricia Hill Collins suggests that reclaiming the Black feminist intellectual tradition must include challenge to the very definitions of intellectual discourse. The who? what? where? how? and why? of research will always be politically contested. But at the core of Black feminist thought must be the commitment to the interpretation of Black women's experiences and ideas by those who live it (1990: 15). We bring a unique passion, vision and taken-for-granted intimate knowledge that a more 'impartial' researcher will never access.

As I will discuss more fully in Chapter One, history is perspectival, each approach presenting its own subjective truth. This chapter not only outlines some of the philosophical issues embedded in historical query, but also lays the foundation for my historical process.
CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

If we are good jazz musicians, the new sounds don’t alarm or threaten us. We look for the connections, find how to merge and how to change, sometimes we reorient ourselves to create space for a new voice, and sometimes we step aside. But always we glory in a process which allows our work to always be new, always be challenging, always be surprising, and which does not assume that issues are settled, conversations ended, or scores finished (Brown, 1991: 90).

Writing History: A Philosophical Inquiry

The core values of inclusion/exclusion, the defining elements of what constitutes history and the process of documenting history, require an understanding of the underlying philosophical elements of historiography. Understanding the philosophy of history will underscore the reasons for the exclusion of Mary Ann Shadd from the historical record.

The field of historical inquiry involves the debate about the ‘point of view’ of the historian. The range of discussion from positivistic objectivism through to scepticism is one of tremendous complexity. What follows is not a comprehensive outline of the debate. Instead I have isolated key or accessible concepts that bear a relationship to this study.

History--Traditional and Positivistic

The traditionalist or positivistic vision describes history as recorded knowledge of the past, past events,
past actualities. It is concerned with the whole range of social activity; it is more concerned with what has been than what is; it particularizes, studies the unique and looks at concrete social activities (Williams, 1958: 4-9). Thus history as a science is 'idiographic' and not 'nomothetic'; that is, requiring an objective process of investigation of a particular subject, not creating general laws (Fogel & Elton, 1983: 20). In some estimates, a reliance on general laws could lead to a disregard of evidence that might undermine or contradict these laws (Ballard, 1970: 136). Instead, traditional historical methodology focuses on the importance of evidence; it requires accuracy, precision, with the ultimate goal the discovery of 'truth' (Fogel & Elton, 1983: 9). This commitment to 'truth' presupposes the ability to discover "wie es eigentlich gewesen," how it really was; but others have more cautiously maintained we can at least discover "das es gewesen ist," that it really was (Offen et al, 1991: 80).

History and Objectivity

In the 'quest for truth' it is the positivistic historian's task to critically detect and eliminate bias, partisan accounts, contradictions, obscurities, incompetence; to avoid value judgements; treat the past with total objectivity; and ultimately to adhere to a principle of complete detachment (William, 1958: 22; Baron,
History is a reconstruction of the past based on available information, documentation, artifacts and stories. The past event remains constant and objective, but loses its objectivity in the understanding and reporting. The positivistic historian demands that all historians must maintain their objectivity in order to eliminate this shift from objective fact to subjective truth. This approach to understanding and exploring the historical process is problematic and contradictory since the complexity of social relations cannot be subjected to formulaic or objective rules of analysis (Fogel & Elton, 1983: 10).

If preoccupied with a systematic method of inquiry, how then can the historian systematize the unpredictability of human activities? But predictability is a concept held by positivistic historians. Here it is felt that historical information can be used to predict the future. However, critics of positivistic historical methodology agree that "a historian who claims an ability to predict the future has lost sight of the fundamental concepts of history" (Baron, 1986: 21-23). History is not static, it is not predetermined, and there are no laws of continuity.

Historical positivistic objectivity has been challenged by those who believe that it is necessary for historians to make value judgements in their reconstruction of the past. That is historians cannot make any
investigation without certain presuppositions, except from a "point of view" (Dray, 1989: 3; Gordon, 1971: 183). The historian addresses the topic from a particular mind set through filters that are shaped by the individual context. This thesis is unambiguously defined by my own political point of view and commitment to the lives of Black women as well as my academic commitment to the field of mass communication. Choosing to research the life and works of Mary Ann Shadd fuses and satisfies those interests.

The challenge to historical positivism is also presented by those who recognize that historical inquiry does not take place in isolation. Thomas Kuhn in his investigation of the scientific community highlights that there are borders that determine the range of discussion of investigation. The community of inquiry, though characterized by shifts in paradigm, is preoccupied with achieving consensus. That is, after gaining membership "in a particular scientific community...subsequent practice will seldom evoke overt disagreement over fundamentals."

But researchers whose works are based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice. That commitment and the apparent consensus it produces are prerequisites for normal science... (Kuhn, 1962: 11).

Challenges to Historical Positivism: it's a jazz 'thang'

Within this discussion of an essential 'point of view' in historical inquiry there are three main theories:
'historical scepticism,' 'perspectivism' and 'objectivism,' that challenge the traditional positivist approach. Using the critique principally offered by Dray (1989) and other analysts of the historical process, the three arguments will be explored.

The first, historical scepticism, holds that points of view are arbitrary and cannot be empirically tested. No account of history can be presented as representing a truer picture than another. Consequently historians who believe in the scepticism theory also claim that no real knowledge, 'no knowable truth' of the past can be achieved. The sceptical theory still satisfies some need in its insight into the past. Although the historical sceptics' point of view partly determines their concept of what happened it is also based on evidence, good or bad, evidence which can be "criticized relevantly and rationally provided the critic took up, hypothetically, the point of view of the author" (Dray, 1989: 3, 62).

Like scepticism, historical perspectivism argues that it is impossible to distinguish from all available points of view which is 'truth.' But instead of stating that truth cannot be known, or that any one point of view presents the whole 'truth,' perspectivists believe instead that all points of view provide some 'truth' about the past. They insist that since people's lives are perspectival, or subjective, to study their lives in a historical context requires a perspectival methodology that
accepts as valid a range of perspectives (Dray, 1989: 64-65).

The third theory, historical objectivism, is considered the final stage in a logical progression from scepticism through to perspectivism. This approach requires the acceptance of one point of view as authoritative, one ultimate ‘truth.’ Though critical of positivistic objectivity, historical objectivism is also structured around hegemonic ideology since it facilitates the “transmission of certain preconceptions, assumptions, notions and beliefs that structure the view of the world from among certain groups in a specific society” (Kellner, 1990: 17). It is this historical hegemony that has meant that the canon is defined by a White and male vision of the primacy of a White and male historical experience.

Unlike the positivistic notions of objectivity outlined earlier, this is a “relational type of objectivity.” Relativists do agree that although ‘objective reality’ is something “we know we can never altogether reach...we need not apologize for assuming that it is there, or for believing that our zigzag course brings us swinging in on a circle of ever closer vantage points for discerning its salient features” (Dray, 1989: 70).

This quest for ‘objective reality’ has been a traditional preoccupation of the physical sciences, a position critiqued by Kuhn. In his analysis he points out that even in the physical sciences where objective truth
has been thought irrefutable, the scientist can never take
in all its reality since all reality is evaluated through
paradigmatic filters. Instead Kuhn proposes that it is

a process whose successive stages are
caracterized by an increasingly detailed and
refined understanding of nature. But nothing
that has been or will be said makes it a process
of evolution toward anything. Inevitably that
lacuna will have disturbed many readers. We are
all deeply accustomed to seeing science as the
one enterprise that draws constantly nearer to
some set goal, set by nature in advance (Kuhn,

The relational objectivist, though committed to one
ultimate historical truth, recognizes that there will be a
"plurality of perspectives" regarding said truth.
Therefore, the relativist focuses on understanding the
interconnectedness of perspectives; suggesting that there
be a "translation formula which connects what is said from
the various perspectives in a necessary way" (Dray, 1989:
71). The potentiality of a connectedness retains the
possibility of agreement in perspectives. However this
agreement is not of past actuality, but an agreement in how
varying points of view will view the past. So if there is
an agreement in how we see the past there is a greater
probability that there will be an agreement in what we see
(Dray, 1989: 72).

It is not clear how this will be accomplished since
the historian is autonomous and can be selective and
presume to reconstruct the historical moment, while holding
everything up for questioning. "The historian is the judge
of his sources...[and] the criterion for his judgement is the coherence of his construction" (Ricoeur, 1984: 9). Thus, historians must accept that there are many roads to historical understanding.

This thesis assumes a perspectival theoretical position and accepts as valid the subjective nature of the historical quest for truth. That is, the perspectives we have traditionally received about Mary Ann Shadd are valid in that they speak to the points of view of historians as well as the value they have placed on her historical presence. I am not attempting to pursue a universally valid historical truth about Mary Ann Shadd and her role as a newspaperwoman; I intend to present one element in the matrix of history that constitutes Canada's collective historical consciousness (Ferro, 1984: ix).

The capitalist hegemony has regarded as irrelevant the significance of the Black experience. The logical whole of the Black experience that has persisted in historical analysis has been based on systematic selectivity, a selectivity that does not fundamentally integrate the Black North American experience. Blacks are still oppositionally situated against a White normative. The exclusion is not based on a momentary or arbitrary whim or shift in opinion but precipitated by a fundamentally racist and oppressive ideology, because "to control the past is to master the present" (Ferro, 1984: vii).

This challenge does not intend to silence but to
broaden the range of historical inquiry. The intent is to subvert the "logic of exclusion" and go beyond prescribed boundaries to create a more democratic framework (Kellner, 1990, 9).

Writing Black History: Towards an Afrocentric Definition

We are a people. A people do not throw their geniuses away. And if they are thrown away, it is our duty as artists and as witnesses for the future to collect them again for the sake of our children, and if necessary, bone by bone (Walker, 1983: 92).

The evolution of a Black historical tradition is based on the logic of democratic inclusion. The work of the Black historian began first with claiming the rightful place of Blacks in history and contesting the 'official' version of history. The official historical writing was narrowly Eurocentric and other 'peoples' entered history with their 'discovery' and interaction with Europeans (Ferro, 1984: x; Thorpe, 1971: 9).

The task of Black history is to dismantle the dominant ideological philosophy of a single and universally acceptable vision of history. However, traditional historians challenge this and any alternative vision with particularistic commitments, as enemies of objective and universal 'truth' (Novick, 1988: 469). Black and feminist historians assert a new, particularistic consciousness that challenges the concept of universalistic norms. That is, both make clear their loyalties to their community or communities. Their loyalties define and make
distinct their historical vision. This commitment to particularity calls first for a transformation of the dominant historical consciousness (Novick, 1988: 470).

The first principle of the particularistic vision begins with a preoccupation with the contribution of exceptional achievements by individual Blacks. While on the one hand this is used to enhance Black self-esteem, it is also intended to inform Whites that Blacks could be 'valuable' members of the community. The focus on the exceptional is also indicative of a racist ideology that limits/ restricts the full participation of Blacks in all areas of life" (Novick, 1988: 480; Walker, 1991: xi).

The second principle of a particularistic approach to history, while asserting the distinctiveness of the discursive and cognitive styles of being Black and woman, also challenges traditional racist and sexist assumptions about cognitive styles and modes of discourse. That is, it rejects the reductionist labels of the patriarchal hegemony that focuses on Black subjectivity versus White objectivity and women's intuitiveness versus the analytical approach of men. The particularistic historian recognizes there is a relationship between power and knowledge and seeks to combat the prominence of such racist and sexist prejudices and stereotypes. Because of the onslaught of racist historiography, the Black historical tradition has been expanded so that Blacks are presented as healthy subjects, not perpetually maimed objects of victimization (Novick,

Not all Black and female historians accept the principle of particularization. It is rejected by some who view it as a perpetuation of ghettoization that holds back integration into the mainstream. They reject the notion that "skin colour confers epistemological privilege," believing that acceptance of such a privilege denigrates the value of intellectual or scholastic pursuits. In contrast, others maintain that accepting the primacy of one’s Black and female identity/identities means accepting one’s privileged insider access to the Black and female experience (Novick, 1988: 472). Accepting this privileged insider status means that Black researchers have to have a commitment not only to the field but a commitment to community, the African community (Atwater, 1984: 6). I unequivocally believe that my survival depends on my willingness to reject individualism and focus my commitment on the collective good.

This commitment is not readily evident in all Black historians. Black historian John Hope Franklin is an

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6After the publication of his book, From Slavery to Freedom in 1947, Franklin was known to White historians as the model Black historian. Franklin refused to label himself a Black historian and instead, classified himself a historian of the South who happened to be Black; in fact much of his work did not focus on the Black community. In 1956, after teaching for twenty years at a historically Black college, Franklin, the symbol of integrationist optimism, was the first Black historian hired at a traditionally white college (Brooklyn College). Though affected by racist attitudes in the academy, Franklin limited his angry rebuttals to written pieces that he kept
example of the pervasiveness of the dominant positivistic historiography, proving that acceptance of its traditions transcends racial barriers. He states:

The [N]egro historian must resist the temptation to pollute his scholarship with polemics, diatribes, arguments...if he yields to this attractive temptation, he can by one act destroy his effectiveness and disqualify himself as a true and worthy scholar...The positive role of the [N]egro scholar [is] to combat the forces that isolate him and his people and, like the true patriot that he is to contribute to the solution of the problems that all Americans face in common (quoted in Novick, 1988: 473).

Cornel West does not acquiesce as does Franklin. Instead, he articulates the frustration and the dilemma of the Black intellectual seeking professional legitimization in the academy while maintaining a commitment centre on a Black cultural worldview. Cornel West points out that the process of professional legitimization is existentially and intellectually stultifying for Black intellectuals. It is existentially debilitating because it not only generates anxieties or defensiveness on the part of Black intellectuals; it also thrives on them. The need for hierarchical ranking and the deep-seated racism shot through bourgeois humanistic scholarship cannot provide Black intellectuals with either the proper ethos or conceptual framework to overcome a defensive posture. And charges of intellectual inferiority can never be met upon the opponent's terrain--to try to do so only intensifies one's anxieties. Rather the terrain itself must be viewed as part and parcel of an antiquated form of life unworthy of setting the terms of contemporary discourse (West, 1991: 138-139).

An Afrocentric vision does not subscribe to

private. Franklin's acquiescence was rejected by the newer generation of Black historians (Novick, 1988: 472-474).
integration at the expense of self. It is culturally centred, insisting on the distinctiveness of the Black experience. Self determination, the third principle of the Black particularistic vision, will and can only defined autonomously by Blacks. There has been and continues to be hostility and resentment of the appropriation of the Black experience by Whites. This does not suggest that only Blacks should and can write about the Black community. Instead there must be a critical evaluation of those who claim to speak with any authority on the Black experience in a voice lacking in any critical examination of the author’s subjectivity and position of power. White historians are being challenged into realizing that their position of dominance in this society has the power to systemically and systematically negate or disfigure the experience of others. Blacks seek to enter into history, our own history, as subjects; able to critically explore not only what is false in ‘colonist’ history but what is true (Offen et al, 1991: 89-90; Gordon, 1971: 6-9).

Black historiography has evolved into an increasingly complex exercise. In Black historical analysis the strength of the collective has taken precedent over individualism. That is, while individuals are profiled, their contribution must always be evaluated within the context of the community. As hooks & West point out, there has to be a collective Black self-recovery (1991: 8).

The priority placed on community has been one of the
most effective strategies used by class and racial communities. Personal successes carry political implications. Individual successes or accomplishments are justified in the name of community; it is the realization of collective purpose. Black feminists however proceed with caution, because gender differentiation cannot be reduced or eliminated to produce a single variable, 'Blackness' (Fox-Genovese, 1991: 31-32). Walker supports this need to reevaluate 'community.' He suggests that historians and students of Black history in particular use the term in a "romantic construct that obscures more than it reveals and posits community as an unproblematic sumnum bonum or sumnum historicum." This romanticized approach focuses on images of communal harmony, cooperation, mutual aid and local initiative. In doing so it denies the freedom to be wrong, to be human; it denies the range and complexity of the Black experiences (Walker, 1991: xv-xxvi). New and imaginative methods of analysis are essential to understanding the totality of the Black experience in North America.

Two interrelated themes dominate the Black historiographical challenge: resistance and autonomy. While both have explicit and overt manifestations a Black redefinition refers to an inner stance, an internalized need to survive, to preserve identity. Blassingame who explores the historical roots of the theme of resistance much more explicitly, states that through slavery Blacks
"learned not only to invent but to circumvent; not only to obey, but to evade; not only to submit but to outwit. Their tradition of defiance was devious rather than direct, employing nerve instead of force" (quoted in Novick, 1988: 486). Resistance redefined does not simply imply violence, but is more fundamentally focused on endurance and survival (Dubois, 1980: 29). 

Black historians have similarly challenged the dominant theme of Black dependency and Black self-definition vis-a-vis a White norm. The history of Blacks in the diaspora often begins with enslavement, so the concept of a wholly autonomous individual community is problematic. Here too autonomy has been redefined by Blacks as an 'inner autonomy.' While Black communities from earliest slavery to contemporary North American society have faced a White paternalistic hegemony, Blacks have always maintained their capacity to mold and maintain their own norms and distinctive institutions (Walker, 1991: xii). These have proved distinctive because they have drawn from the legacy and richness of African cultures as well as from the new racialized North American slave culture. Blacks did internalize and continue to perpetuate some of the dominant values of White society but any analysis of post-colonial diasporic African communities reveals core similarities and the primacy of an African past despite enslavement and the pervasiveness of the Eurocentric hegemony (Ladner, 1971: 181-191).
Much of Canada’s Black historiography is preoccupied with "contributionism"; the Canadian historical tradition by African American standards is still in its infancy. But such contributionist works as Dan Hill’s The Freedom Seekers have argued for the distinctiveness of a Black culture and a Black past in Canada.

From the 1950s to the present, the more recent Black immigrant population has made extensive contributions to defining Canada’s cultural landscape. However racist ideology has used one Black group identity to subsume and essentially marginalize the other.7 When Black is made synonymous with immigrant, the preeminence of the more "ancestrally Black" community’s presence in defining Canada’s cultural landscape is overshadowed. To be Black fundamentally cannot mean to be Canadian; both groups are relegated to 'their' place outside of what is classified as ‘truly’ Canadian.

Historians are beginning to address the multiplicity of cultural identities that go into creating the Black Canadian identity, focusing on their divergences and complementarities (Walker, 1979: 39). This focus on themes and issues that reveal the complexities of the Black experience in Canada has led to a shift in analysis. The process is two-fold. First, the Black experience is being

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7Racism is in fact reductionist. To limit the Black community to new immigrant vs "ancestrally Black" is simplistic and denies the cultural heterogeneity of both groups.
contextualised or framed within its social context to expose how various systems of power have impacted on our identity. The second is a much more difficult process because it requires a similar contextual exploration of the conflicts and interconnections among Black communities in Canada.

Writing Women's History: a Wider/Inclusive Vision?

Traditionally, knowledge, truth, and reality have been constructed as if men’s experiences were normative, as if being human meant being male (Barbre et al, 1989: 3).

All women historians do not focus on women’s history nor are they necessarily feminist. A feminist perspective of history is much more than merely adding women to history; it is instead "a transforming vision with revolutionary implications for the understanding of all human activities" (Novick, 1988: 496). By the 1970s, the height of the women’s movement, the issue seemed settled that women’s history could only be legitimately written from a feminist perspective, not only to include women but to also seek alternative explanations for our historical presence. Like Black history, women’s history is characterized by its commitment to particularity (Beddoe, 1983: 3; Dubois, 1980: 29; Tilly, 1989: 440).

Women’s history has developed themes similar to those evident in Black history: overcoming the historical neglect by stressing the contribution of women to all aspects of
life; replacing the dominant focus on women as "oppressed damaged victims" with a focus on healthy active women resisting the oppressive society; and celebrating the 'autonomous' culture of women with women-centred values and institutions (Novick, 1988: 497; Beddoe, 1983: 6; Lerner, 1979: xiv).

Feminist historians are ambivalent about the focus on 'contributionism,' differing from Black historians who saw no personal conflict in documenting Black contributions to White society. Feminist historians suggest that a preoccupation with 'contributionism' means accepting a male-centred definition of importance and excellence, adapting a male framework. They also consider that a focus on 'contributionism' obscures the reality that women have been systematically excluded from full participation in society (Novick, 1988: 498; Fox-Genovese, 1991: 231-235). Even the historical documentation of women who have actively participated in the struggle for equality has been greeted with reservation by some feminists who are convinced these women were victims of a 'false consciousness,' a naive belief that women's equality can be pursued in alliance with men, and a failure to realize that the basis of their oppression was the patriarchal family. Documenting the history of women's oppression reveals the depth of male-centredness and misogyny in the society. However, focusing on women's oppression means not telling the true story of women's lives but rather the history of
men's oppression of women. It means men are seen as the active agents and women as their victims; women are still being placed in a male-centred framework (Novick, 1988: 498-500).

Creating a feminist historiography of women's autonomy therefore begins with a reconceptualization of the 'cult of true womanhood' which traditionally defined women as 'pure and submissive.' Viewed as an ideological construct, it becomes clearer how it succeeds in restricting woman's full participation in society, relegating her to the private or domestic sphere. The true woman was: (1) inferior to men physically and intellectually and had a special quality that made her their moral superior; (2) delicate, frail, emotional and spiritual; (3) inherently chaste and modest and exhibiting no interest in sex—in fact it was her responsibility to subdue her husband’s passion; (4) predestined by God and nature to a separate sphere—the home—because motherhood and marriage were her ideal positions (Guy-Sheftall, 1990: 10; Yee, 1992: 40-59; Collins, 1991: 43-58; Carby, 1987: 20-39; Sterling, 1984: 20).

Feminist history maintains that this 'woman's sphere,'

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8The "cult of true womanhood" was the patriarchal ideology that defined the boundaries of acceptable White female behaviour from the 1820s until the Civil War. See Ann Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830 - 1930. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970. Not only does Scott trace the roots and effects of the "cult of true womanhood," she points out how it contradicted White women's reality.
though confining, formed the foundation of women's support systems and their political organizations. Her isolation to the domestic sphere, while it served to exclude her from full participation, allowed her some degree of psychic autonomy and a forum in which to create and define an autonomous woman-centred world with its own unique set of norms and rituals (Dubois, 1980: 29-30). Radical or lesbian feminists, in affirming the primacy of a woman-centred culture, have reintroduced the significance and historical roots of women's networks, of support and sisterhood; putting women first whether as friends, lovers or political allies (Smith-Rosenberg quoted in Novick, 1988: 502).

Women's separatism does have its critics. Ellen Dubois, researcher and commentator on the history of female political culture, supports an analysis of a woman-centred culture, but she offers a critique of a radically separatist approach to women's history. She suggests that a radical ideological perspective does not investigate the relationship of a woman-centred autonomy to the dominant male culture. That is, it fails to analyze women's history in relation to the larger social and historical development of which it was a part. In underplaying this inherent conflict the radical perspective makes women's oppression begin to seem almost irrelevant (Dubois, 1980: 31). In addition, a separatist ideological perspective has the potential to replace confrontational issues among women
with a utopian celebration of 'sisterhood' devoid of any analysis of how classes of women have oppressed and still oppress other classes of women (Dubois, 1990: xii).

In Canada, women's historical writing bears a direct relationship to the feminist discourse. The starting point is the recognition of the inconsistencies between women's lived experiences and the 'official' documentation, that is, the absence of women's lived experiences. White feminist historians are being challenged to acknowledge Canada's history as a multi-ethnic/multi-racial society. Once this is acknowledged it then becomes vital that intersections of identities defined not only by gender but also by race, class, and sexual orientation be confronted. Canada's women's history, then, is characterized by diversity and conflict as it brings to the forefront the history of a dominant culture and historically oppressed racial, ethnic and linguistic minorities. The real challenge now is shifting our frame of reference so that the politics of diversity is synonymous with the politics of inclusion (Offen et al, 1991: xxix; Carty, 1993: 15-18).
Writing Black Women's History: The Outsider Within

When it came to the Black woman, scholars found it exceedingly difficult to separate her from the oppressed Black subgroup and treat her as a distinct entity, possessing a history and culture of her own. Before the study of Black women can take off the larger society must be educated to see Black women as distinct historical beings (Hine, 1990: xi).

Black and feminist historians have introduced into historiography a commitment to particularity. While their perspectival and particularistic approach challenges universalist/dominant historical values, this challenge has proved limited. The Black woman, though a citizen of both the Black and female community, is 'invisible' in both analyses, silenced.

The Black historical tradition has been plagued by a quest for Black manhood. That is, Black male revision of the historical tradition has not purged them of their sexism. The Black historical tradition has been and is male, and Black women, with a few exceptions, have not been and are not the subject of its historical investigation. Similarly women's history has been and is overwhelmingly an exploration of the 'essential woman' -- White and middle class. In an appeal for sisterhood, race has been subsumed by gender and has served to deny the material differences in the lives of women. White feminist works, Black feminists suggest, must begin to investigate 'Whiteness,' not just Blackness, as a racial categorization, as well as the hierarchizing of gender over race. This analytical
inclusion would meaningfully expose White women’s roles as both the subject of and perpetuators of hegemonic control (Fox-Genovese, 1991: 17; Carby, 1987: 17-18).

The discussion of Black women’s history is based on the premise that the invisibility of Black women can be attributed to two widely accepted ideologies--the supremacy of whiteness and maleness. Both ideologies, while they have an impact on the analysis of Blacks and women, carry particular consequences for conceptualizations of Black women (Guy-Sheftall, 1990: 12) A valid discussion of Black women’s history must be predicated on the fusion of race, class, and gender analysis (Gilkes, 1989: 574; Carby, 1983: 212).

The process of the historical inclusion of Black women parallels that already elaborated for Blacks and women. However, the point of divergence is its distinctiveness in asserting the primacy of Black women’s history in exposing the complicated experiences of the intersections of gender, race and class inequities (Gilkes, 1989: 575). Black female experiences cannot be neatly isolated into any one category; they implicitly offer a critique of Black history and women’s history (Hine, 1992: xi). Black women’s history has two focal points: first, documenting the social influences on Black women’s consciousness, and second, exploring Black women’s self-definitions. The experience of slavery has meant that the Black woman’s identity, in a post-emancipation society, is full of
contradictions; the social construction of her identity has been used to maintain her subordination (Collins, 1991: 71). A sexist society demands that Black women exhibit the attributes of true womanhood--pure, fragile, submissive--but this is the antithesis to the construct of her material reality.

As a slave the Black woman was a labourer, physically powerful and forcibly required to endure sexual relations with her master (hooks, 1981: 22; Lerner, 1979: 69). Black women were sexually denigrated and forcibly available to White men as no group of White women have ever been. This sexual racism has meant that Black women have borne the brunt of society's need to degrade and devalue women (Collins, 1991: 81; hooks, 1981: 110; Lerner, 1979: 70-72). The devaluation and abuse of Black women has known no bounds or limits since stereotypes generated by Black and White men has meant that they have found no allies in either group. However, Black women are acutely aware of the need for alliances with Black men in the racialized political struggle since our emancipation is woven into that of the race (hooks, 1984: 69; Hull et al, 1982: 16).

Although Black women contradicted all the principles of the 'cult of true womanhood' they facilitated the 'true womanhood' of White women. In the slave community Black women were breeders and sex surrogates; their sexuality and fertility were exploited to sustain the slave economy (Collins, 1991: 50).
Black women's labor was also essential to sustaining the slave economy; this too served to broaden their public sphere. The nature of work was the same for enslaved Black women and men. Neither worked to benefit family but to benefit their owners. Neither had freedom over their lives. The impact was similarly inhumane and oppressive for all slaves; in essence, there was general equality between enslaved Black men and Black women (Collins, 1991: 49).

These realities of Black women's experiences have meant their inability to conform to the cult of 'true womanhood.' Misguidedly, a racist ideology ahistorically identifies Black women's historical realities as one reason for the pathology of post-emancipation Black communities. Black women have been stereotyped by controlling personas of 'mammy,' 'matriarch,' single 'welfare' mother, whore, and emasculators of Black men (Collins, 1991: 70-78).

Black feminist historiography demands that the misconceived set of beliefs must be reevaluated. Failure to explore the impact and ideological power of the 'cult of true womanhood' on Black women's lives will needlessly limit the perspective of feminist historiography. Also, there needs to be a fresh look at pre-emancipation and post-emancipation experiences, including a look at family structure, myths of Black womanhood, sex role stereotypes and the nature of resistance. This is ecause the expressed pathology of the Black man, the Black family and the Black
community has at its root the misconceptions facilitated by the intersection of racist and sexist ideology.

Historians, specifically Black feminist historians, in their discussion of the complexities inherent in Black women’s identities, begin the discourse with an analysis of our visibility. That is, Black women are always defined in their social context. Black women’s history has not developed simply to analyze the roots of sexist discrimination, but has also developed to examine the experiences of Black women and the construction of race and gender in the society. While making the Black woman visible, it also challenges the theoretical framework of feminism so as to maintain its potential for political and intellectual vitality. Black feminist history particularizes the category woman and simultaneously particularizes the category Black. It cannot simply reclaim Black women’s voices or simply identify them, but must move beyond to contextualize the voices to, "reconstitute the ‘discursive’ world which the ‘subject’ inhabited [shaped] and were shaped by" (Offen et al., 1990: 94; Lerner, 1979: 65-66).

It is impossible to look at the lives of Black women without acknowledging the tension between race, class and gender. This makes their invisibility the more perplexing. Sojourner Truth in her speech of 1851 at the national women’s Suffrage Convention is one embodiment of this tension:
Ain't I a woman? Look at me Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could head me...And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man--when I could get it--And bear the lash as well and ain't I a woman? I have born thirteen children and seen most all sold into slavery and when I cried out a mother's grief none but Jesus heard me...and ain't I a woman?...If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all alone together women ought to be able to turn it rightside up again (Busby, 1992: xxxviii).

Pioneering 'compensatory historiography' of Black women, in the process of discovering and celebrating Black women's contribution to Black peoples, has played a significant role in contemporary analyses and redefinitions of the world of woman. Black historians of Black women's experiences have focused particular attention on women's narratives. Women are not only being placed in history but the record of women's past is in their own voices. This commitment to the 'honesty' of the experience is evident in the oral histories of Black women that have been celebrated in Canada. Makeda Silvera in the text Silenced (1983) presents the voices and the experiences of Black domestic workers in Canada. Dionne Brand, coordinator of an oral history project on 'The Lives of Black Women Working in Canada,' in a multi-media, multi-

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disciplinary approach demonstrates her commitment to the primacy of Black women telling their own story, in their own words.¹⁰

The writings of Mary Ann Shadd—letters, editorial and speeches, stored in archives across North America—are the legacy of her experience and her interaction with her community and society in her own words. The recovery of her voice means using the tools she created and used to articulate her ideas. Any analysis then will have to accept and incorporate her subjectivity (Offen et al, 1991: xxxi). In addition, all contemporary analysis cannot discard, but must transcend, through rigorous interrogation and contextualization, the contributionist approach to Black women’s history (Lerner, 1979: 65). That is, women like Mary Ann Shadd cannot simply be treated as exceptional Black women; instead their historical contribution must be critically evaluated as part of a larger social reality.

In Canadian feminist history there is a dominance and universalisation of the White, middle class, heterosexual, able-bodied and anglophone point of view (Offen et al,

¹⁰The documentation of Black Women’s oral history includes a series of collaborative film projects, Older, Stronger, Wiser directed by Claire Prieto and Dionne Brand (assoc. dir.), (1989, colour, 16mm, 28 min; Sisters in the Struggle directed by Ginny Strikman and Dionne Brand (assoc. dir.), (1990, colour, 16 mm, 29 min); Long Time Coming directed by Dionne Brand (1993, colour, 16 mm, 28 min). All three films were distributed by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB). Another NFB film celebrating Black women’s past and present is Black Mother, Black Daughter, directed by Sylvia Hamilton and Claire Prieto, (1989, colour, 16mm, 28 min.).
The universalising of the 'privileged' identity and the avoidance of issues of inequality, subordination and dominance threaten the development of women's history. In Canada works that explore the lives of women of Colour are done by women of Colour. Women of Colour have realized the need for a strong and autonomous field of historical inquiry since integration quite often means historical marginalization, inequality and absence.

However, the responsibility for the inclusion of all women's experience also rests with 'privileged' White historians. White women in Canada have not led discrete lives isolated from women of Colour. Therefore the stories of Native, Black, Arab and Asian women have core relevance to their lives. If historical integrity is to be achieved it is essential that all points of convergence and divergence be examined.

Fortunately Black women and other women of Colour are aggressively pushing back the boundaries of theorizing about women and women's history. These challenges have helped in the evolution of the analysis, deconstruction and recovery of a multi-perspectival historical approach. While the conceptual tools are changing and the tensions persist, it is possible to expose the worlds of women (Offen et al, 1991: xxxvii; Carty, 1993: 14).

A commitment to particularizing the experiences of respective constituencies has transformed the historical debate. A perspectival and particularistic paradigm is a
direct challenge to the norms of universality. The
discussion has shifted from a philosophical preoccupation
with universal 'truth' and the objectively detached
historical point of view to a core commitment to
acknowledging and exploring subjective differences.
Differences will not be explored in discrete isolation but
as differences in how people define themselves and interact
as socialized beings in a contextualized environment.

Accepting a Black feminist historian's commitment to
the historical lives of Black women I clearly will not and
cannot do justice to all Black women's history in this
single work. Our 'herstories' are too numerous and richly
diverse. All I wish to do is explore one very small
segment of the matrix of our story. As Brand suggests,
recovering Black women in Canada as historical actors
ultimately serves not only to clarify the historical, but
also provides the framework to recover a revolutionary
method for a struggle both feminist and Black (1991: 13).
CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURE

I felt that it was important to examine the complexity of ideas that exist in both scholarly and everyday life and present those ideas in a way that made them not less powerful or rigorous but accessible. Approaching theory in this way challenges both the ideas of educated elites and the role of theory in sustaining hierarchies of privilege (Collins, 1991: xii).

Black Feminist Theory: Constructing Alternatives

One consistent image that persists in the literature about Mary Ann Shadd is that of a determined woman who acted on her convictions. Mary Ann Shadd’s experiences were unique among all women because she contradicted popular notions of a woman’s role. Mary Ann recognized her privilege and distinctiveness and often commented about it in her editorials. There she challenged women to break from the restrictions placed upon them by society.

To begin to understand the significance of Mary Ann Shadd’s life and work, a contextual analysis inclusive of race, class and gender must define the framework. Black feminist theory provides this analytical framework. Fundamental to the theory is a commitment to the distinctiveness of Black women's experiences and a recognition that their struggle to actualize their humanity must confront racist, classist and sexist oppression simultaneously as evidenced in the Mary Ann Shadd’s political advocacy. These commitments have created some of the problematics in defining Black feminist theory.
Any attempt to conceptualize Black feminist theory must first address the tensions and contradictions embedded within. Patricia Hill Collins, in her work *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (1991), addresses some of the diverse and contradictory meanings of Black feminist theory and begins to identify some of the distinguishing features of the theory. Her text provides the foundation for this chapter.

**Black Feminists**

There is some diversity of opinion as to who can be categorically classified a Black feminist. A sweeping categorization labels all women of African decent Black feminists without any regard for their personal, theoretical and political positions. In this indiscriminate labelling being Black and female constitute the only two essential signifiers of a Black feminist consciousness. Others have more selectively focused on Black women and some Black men whose works and life exhibit some feminist sensibility. This feminist sensibility focuses on the ideological--Black women's simultaneous struggle with racism and sexism--and the experiential--the resulting distinctiveness of Black women's experiences because of racial and gender oppression. An even more restrictive categorization of Black feminists identifies a select group of Black women who have articulated distinctive feminist politics. This suggests that only
Black women can be Black feminists. Each of the preceding categorizations a Black feminist consciousness has a biologically determined prerequisite that assumes that:

being of African descent somehow produces a certain consciousness or perspective... By presenting race as being fixed and immutable--something rooted in nature--these approaches mask the historical construction of racial categories, the shifting meaning of race, and the crucial role of politics and ideology in shaping conceptions of race (Collins, 1991: 20).

However, I accept that there is some validity in the range of categorizations. On the one hand, Black women, because of their unique experiences vis-a-vis race and gender, must provide the foundation of Black feminist thought. However, not all Black women share a Black feminist political perspective. A Black feminist political perspective at its core challenges the belief in the inherent superiority and dominance of one race and/or gender over all others (Lorde, 1984: 45). The experience of Blackness and femaleness has dictated a commonality in the experiences of Black women; it has also predisposed us to, but has not guaranteed, a distinctive Black womanist consciousness. Once a Black feminist theory is generated, it is available for anyone to embrace regardless of race, class and gender. So there are in essence two groups: Black feminists, and individuals who embrace a Black feminist ideology. Fundamental to each group is its inherent heterogeneity in membership and perspective.
Black Feminism: Defining Elements

The difficulty in defining who are Black feminists is matched by the equally difficult task of conceptualizing the defining elements of Black feminism. Again I accept that such a definition must avoid the materialist position that being Black and female automatically determines a Black feminist consciousness, since such a definition is without regard for differences in Black women's experiences and worldviews. Similarly, an open door and idealist policy that disregards the centrality of Black women's experiences must be avoided. Failing to acknowledge the primacy of Black women obscures or denies their complex reality.

Black feminist thought is:

the special angle of vision that Black women bring to the knowledge production process... Black feminist thought consists of specialized knowledge created by [Black] women which clarifies a standpoint (those experiences and ideas shared by [Black] women that provide a unique angle of vision on self, community, and society) of and for Black women. In other words, Black feminist thought encompasses theoretical interpretations of Black women's reality by those who live it (Collins, 1991: 21-22).

This definition not only suggests that not all Black women will generate Black feminist thought, but it also places Black women in a social context, thereby allowing for the inclusion of other groups in the production of Black feminist thought.

However, there are even more comprehensive and inclusive definitions advanced by Black feminists. First,
Anna Julia Cooper, a Black intellectual foremother, has provided us with a universalized definition of the Black woman's struggle in a 1893 speech:

We take our stand on the solidarity of humanity, the oneness of life, and the unnaturalness and injustice of all special favouritism, whether of sex, race, country, or condition....The colored woman feels that woman's cause is one and universal; and that ...not till race, color, sex, and condition are seen as accidents, and not the substance of life; not till the universal title of humanity to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is conceded to be inalienable to all; not till then is woman's lesson taught and woman's cause won--not the white woman's nor the black woman's, not the red woman's but the cause of every man and of every woman who has writhed silently under a mighty wrong (quoted in Collins, 1991: 37).

Contemporary Black feminist cultural critics such as Alice Walker and bell hooks have also espoused similar humanist worldviews.

Alice Walker in defining/redefining the word 'feminist' speaks of the 'womanist.' A 'womanist' loves other women sexually and/or non-sexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility...and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically for health. Traditionally universalist, as in "Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cousins are white, beige and black? Ans: Well you know the colored race is just like a flower garden, with every color flower represented...Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender (Walker, A, 1983: xi).

Here Walker suggests that the womanist is concerned with the lives of all people, women and men of the 'coloured race'--where 'coloured' is redefined to truly include the
whole spectrum of colours to include Whites.

Similarly, bell hooks focuses on the total community but she articulates a much more critical and ideological feminist framework:

Feminism is not simply a struggle to end male chauvinism or a movement to ensure that women will have equal rights with men; it is a commitment to eradicating the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels—sex, race and class, to name a few—and a commitment to reorganizing U.S. Society so that the self development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desire (hooks, 1981: 194).

Black feminist theory cannot be a process where only Black women are empowered; instead it must maintain a commitment to human empowerment and solidarity. However, Black feminists, because of Black women’s unique experiences with race, gender and class, demand that this commitment to humanism allows space for autonomous self-determination. It is this process of self-conscious struggle that ultimately will empower all women and men to actualize a humanist vision of community (Collins, 1991: 38-39).

Core Themes

The individual consciousness or the everyday experiences of Black women have often gone unarticulated or are subsumed by dominant and hegemonic messages. Black feminists recognize the need for a strong collective standpoint defined by the individual voices of Black women.
articulating their everyday experiences for themselves and others. As Audre Lorde warns, "it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others for their use and to our detriment" (1984: 45). Black feminist thought offers a process where new interpretations of familiar realities can be developed by Black women.

This commitment to self-definition and self-actualization by Black women has focused on particularizing the diversity of experiences of Black women, yet core themes and similarities have emerged in their works.

There are six core themes that have dominated Black feminist works. They include: Black women’s work/labour; Black women’s objectification/controlling images of Black women; the tradition of Black women’s resistance and self-definition; Black women and motherhood; Black women’s activism; and Black women and sexual politics. While these are presented as core themes this in no way suggests that there is homogeneity in Black women’s responses to these themes. In fact, social class, sexual orientation, education, ethnicity and age are only some of the distinguishing elements that shape the diversity of Black women’s points of view.

Black feminist theory is committed to celebrating Black women’s diversity; it is not founded on essentializing or reducing us to our similarities. Instead it also addresses our contradictions, respects our varying
political positions and is able to come to a politics which is mindful of all these things (Black Women’s Collective of Toronto in Kline, 1989: 37).  

Methodology and Analysis

Is there a distinctive feminist or Black feminist method of inquiry? Feminist researchers such as Sandra Harding (1987) and Patricia Hill Collins (1991) suggest that there is no feminist method or technique for gathering evidence. Instead new research by feminists is challenging the methodological and epistemological assumptions and perspective of traditional research. It is as a result of these challenges that distinctive methodological and epistemological features can be labelled feminist.

There have been confusion and challenges to the concept of a feminist ‘method’ of research because often the term "method" is used to represent not only the method, but also the methodological and epistemological features of investigation. Research method refers to the techniques used for gathering information on the subject of investigation. Harding suggests that techniques fall into essentially three categories: listening to or interrogating informants, observing behaviour, and examining historical

The experience of Blackness and femaleness is an insufficient basis for Black feminist theorizing. Marlee Kline in her critique of the ‘feminist standpoint’ provides a methodological framework that argues against such false generalizations or the essentializing/universalizing of the experience of women.
records (1987: 2).

On the other hand, methodology refers to the theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed (Harding, 1987: 3). For example, phenomenology is an interpretive theory that attempts to understand the human experience, to understand how we experience reality. Traditional research in its use of the phenomenological approach has defined the human experience as White, male and upper-class. However, feminist researchers have claimed this theory in their attempt to understand women's reality. But can a traditional methodological approach allow access to understanding women's reality? This raises epistemological questions. Epistemology is the study/theory of knowledge; it addresses issues such as who can know, what is or can be known and how can it be justified as knowledge. Here too the traditional epistemology has been characterized by male 'authority', but feminists have also challenged this masculinist epistemological hegemony (Harding, 1987: 3).

A Black feminist historical inquiry directly challenges this masculine hegemony. It embraces an epistemological reevaluation of methods, a redefinition of the intellectual space in which the historical text is created and evaluated (Faure, 1981: 71).
Historical Research

The methods used in this study are based on the traditional but are intended to challenge traditional assumptions. Primary and secondary archival research was the historical method of investigation. The primary research focused on examining original materials produced by Mary Ann Shadd including letters, writings and speeches.

The Amistad Research Center is the official repository for much of her correspondences to the American Missionary Association; microfilm copies were available through interlibrary loan. Similarly the Mary Ann Shadd Cary Papers were available from Moorland-Spingam Research Center, Howard University in Washington D.C., the Ontario Provincial Archives in Toronto and the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa.

However, the most significant primary document was the Provincial Freeman. Copies of the newspaper were available on microfilm from the Provincial Archives. The collection covered the prime years of regular circulation of the paper, 1853-1857; it has been suggested in the literature that the paper continued to publish irregularly until 1864. Regrettably, the quality of the materials available was so poor it was not always readable. To complement our discussion of Mary Ann Shadd, several editions of the Voice of the Fugitive were consulted in the Burton Collection of the Detroit Public Library.

Secondary sources and publications that provided some
direct analysis of Mary Ann Shadd's historical contributions and presence in Canada and the United States were extensively consulted. True to the discussions in Chapter One, it should come as no surprise that materials or exploratory research on the life of Mary Ann Shadd were significantly limited. In fact much of the literature comprised children's books, short articles or quite simply a footnote that read 'first Black woman in North America to edit a newspaper.'

Nonetheless, familiar 'methods' have been framed within a Black feminist methodology and epistemology in an attempt to construct/reconstruct the active historical presence of Mary Ann Shadd in Canada's historical and communication landscape. This rearticulation of an alternative methodology and epistemology is essential because as Audre Lorde suggests, "the master's tools cannot dismantle the master's house" (1984, 110).
CHAPTER THREE
HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION

...In the case of Black Canadian history, its study leads to a greater understanding of the Black community itself and of the broader Canadian society of which the Blacks are a part. To overlook Black history is not only to ignore an important cultural heritage; it is to misunderstand the direction of Canadian history in its entirety (D'Oyly, 1982: 51).

The traditional historical records defines Canada in relation to the Black presence as a place of refuge, a haven, the promised land. In the 1800s, this image of acceptance lured thousands of Blacks from servitude in the American South, as well as many free Northern Blacks, to Canada. Slavery in Canada neither approximated the entrenched institution of the American South, nor was it the idyllic sanctuary of Canada’s historical mythology. Canada represented an alternative to the harsh reality of life in the United States. Both fugitive slaves and free Blacks accepted any risks to get to Canada because Canada had passed more favorable anti-slavery legislation than the United States and therefore offered greater potential for their freedom.

Black Canadian History: An Overview, 1605-1860

The distinction of being documented as the first Black to arrive in Canada has been attributed to several different people. First among them is an anonymous man who
died of scurvy at Port Royal in 1606 (Winks, 1971: 1). Matthieu De Coste\textsuperscript{12} is also reported as a guide and translator for the French expedition led by Pierre de Gua in 1605. De Coste stayed in Canada at least until the expedition established the Colony of Port Royal (Carter & Carter, 1989: 19). He is also listed as the servant of the Governor, the Sieur Du Gua de Monts in Acadia in 1608 (Winks, 1971: 1). Most texts have traditionally listed Olivier Le Jeune, not only as the first Black in Canada, but also as the first to have been transported directly from Africa. Le Jeune was captured in Madagascar and arrived in New France\textsuperscript{13} in 1628. At approximately age six he was sold to one of the colonists and was later baptised and named after the Jesuit Missionary, Paul Le Jeune. So began Canada’s involvement in the enslavement of Blacks.

Le Jeune’s capture and presence in Canada did not catapult the country into any large scale slave trade, and the overwhelming majority of slaves, who were relatively

\textsuperscript{12}He is also listed in the historical literature as Matthieu Da Costa.

\textsuperscript{13}Throughout this chapter terms are used to designate areas as they were defined during the varying historical periods. Port Royal refers to a French outpost in what is now Nova Scotia; New France to the French Colony prior to 1763; Upper Canada and Lower Canada, until 1841, and Canada West and Canada East, from 1841 to 1867, to present-day Ontario and present-day Quebec respectively; and the Canadas during both periods, to present-day Ontario and present day Quebec collectively (Winks, 1971: xv).
few, were Panis.\textsuperscript{14} Because the economy of New France was focused on the fur trade, it required neither a skilled nor a large labor force. There was no economic base to profitably build a slave trade (Winks, 1971: 3).

By 1663 colonial administrators realized that for the colony to grow and strengthen France's power, the economy had to diversify. Mines and fisheries were explored, livestock was brought in and new grains were tested to encourage new industry. This new expansive planning changed the demand for manpower. Slavery was one means of increasing the labour force.\textsuperscript{15} On May 1, 1689, Louis XIV granted permission for the importation of Black slaves. However neither the new diversified economy nor the slave trade materialized on the large scale that had been envisioned.

There were two main reasons for the limited growth in the economy. First, the French colonies in the Caribbean were more suitable and profitable because of their favourable climate. In addition, the outbreak of the King

\textsuperscript{14}Records show that the first Canadian slaves were people of the First Nations. Panis, as they were called, were captured as early as 1501 by the Portuguese explorer Gaspar Corte-Real. In 1535 Jacques Cartier, the French Explorer, captured and took several Panis back to France where they were put on public display (Tulloch, 1975: 71-73).

\textsuperscript{15}Other options were also used to increase the potential working population. The state "gave dowries to the needy and grants to those who went forth and multiplied, and forced bachelors into marriage" (Wink, 1971:4).
William's War in 1689 and the War of the Spanish Succession of 1702, made any effective transportation of goods between France and their territories dangerous and unprofitable. Thus the economy in New France reverted to a focus on the declining fur trade.

Nevertheless, slavery slowly but consistently continued to grow. Slaves were needed to satisfy the needs of wealthier families. Most slaves were used as domestic servants or field hands. While it is impossible to definitively state the total slave population, estimates suggest that by 1759 there were 3,604 slaves in New France of whom 1,132 were Black (Winks, 1971: 4-12).\(^{16}\)

Defeated at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, the French signed the Treaty of Paris, ceding total control of all of their North American empire to the British. The treaty also guaranteed that all slave owners in New France were permitted to keep their slaves. British laws and customs supported and strengthened the institution of slavery; like the French, they encouraged no mass importation of slaves, especially not from Africa. Instead, smaller numbers were brought in from the Americans for breeding. Slave owners were particularly interested in slaves already familiar with and accustomed to the winters

\(^{16}\) Winks extensively quotes Professor Marcel Trudel's research on New France's slave population. Trudel presents figures and other information attesting to the complexity of the social relationships between slaves and their masters (Winks, 1971: 9-17).
(Winks, 1971: 25).

The American Revolution of 1776-83 significantly increased the Canadian population. The first wave of immigrants were United Empire Loyalists who supported Britain against the newly united states. Some brought with them their slaves as well as their commitment to maintaining slavery, while others had left the new American republic because they rejected the enslavement of Blacks.

The Loyalists recognized that the Southern economy was sustained by slavery, so in an effort to destabilize the economy they offered freedom to all Southern slaves who volunteered to serve with the British armed forces. This action was not based on Britain’s fundamental rejection of slavery or belief in equality between Blacks and Whites; it was intended to serve their immediate needs. Like their White counterparts, Blacks were offered free land to emigrate to Canada. Blacks took advantage of this opportunity for freedom and served as boatmen, woodsmen, general laborers, buglers and musicians. There was even an entire Black corp called the Black Pioneers (Tulloch, 1975: 77-78).

In 1784 over 4000 Blacks entered Canada as part of the withdrawal of British troops from the United States. More than 3000 of these were destined for Nova Scotia.\textsuperscript{17} Several

\textsuperscript{17}Nova Scotia was a popular because of its strategic seaport location. As an important shipping location it was equally important that a strong settlement was established.
immediate problems awaited the new arrivals. Unless they actively served with the Black Pioneers they received little or no land, rations and seeds were not forthcoming, the land they were given was rocky and inadequate for farming, and most were ill-prepared for the severity of the Canadian winters. As a result many lost their land and some were forced to work as indentured labourers for Whites who had received more favourable land claims.

Under the leadership of Thomas Peters, a former sergeant in the Black Pioneers, many petitioned the former British Secretary of State, W. W. Grenville, to address the inadequacy of the property received by Blacks. Governor John Parr, of Nova Scotia, was ordered by the new Secretary of State, Henry Dundas, to investigate the claims of Peters. Dundas also recommended that Blacks not satisfied with the results of the investigation could relocate to Sierra Leone, a new British colony in West Africa. Over 1000 Black men, women, and children accepted the offer and returned to Africa in the winter of 1791-2 (Tulloch, 1975: 82-90).

Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe, a British Commander during the American Revolution, became a powerful advocate for those who remained. Simcoe was very public in denouncing racism, stating that he would not give "his assent to any law that 'discriminate[d] by dishonest policy between the natives of Africa, America or Europe'" (Winks, 1971:96). Simcoe similarly refused to give support to
segregated Black and White communities. In 1794, 19 Black Loyalists applied to him for land separate from White settlers; he turned them down because of his outrage at their separatist approach (Tulloch, 1975: 93).

The case of Chloe Cooley, a slave girl, proved to be a catalyst for legal action by Simcoe. At the first meeting of the Governor General’s Executive Council, Simcoe heard graphic details of the violent way in which Chloe was bound and transported across the border to be sold. Chloe’s master, like many other slave owners in Upper Canada, feared the strong anti-slavery message of Simcoe. Sensing the inevitable end of slavery, they began selling their slaves in the U.S. to avoid a total loss of their investment. Although Simcoe tried to initiate a lawsuit to prevent such sales, under the current law these slave owners were legally entitled to sell their slaves for profit. Therefore with the assistance of Attorney General, he introduced to the House of Assembly of Upper Canada a bill for the abolition of slavery. The bill received extensive discussion and generated opposition from slave owners, merchants and farmers but was passed unanimously on July 9, 1793 (Winks, 1971: 98).

This final bill was a substantial compromise because it did not lead to the immediate freedom of Blacks. However it contained several important guarantees: no new slaves would be purchased and imported into Upper Canada; no current slaves would be freed; all children born after
the Act would be freed on their twenty-fifth birthday; and indentured contract could last no longer than nine years.

The bill’s jurisdiction was limited to Upper Canada. Unlike Upper Canada other regions did not have strong advocates like Simcoe. However they were able to gain limits to slavery through the courts. Slavery was not finally abolished throughout the British colonies until an act of the Imperial Parliament passed on August 28, 1833 took effect August 1, 1834 (Winks, 1971:111).

The legal end to slavery in Canada brought another wave of Black migration into Upper Canada. This time most of the new migrants were free Northern Blacks hoping to escape the continued discrimination and denial of full citizenship in the northern United States. Canada also attracted many fugitive slaves because Canadian courts would not allow their extradition to the southern States. This solidified Canada’s position as the ‘promised land’ for Blacks. Consequently, between the act’s passage and 1850, over ten thousand Blacks entered Upper Canada. They settled in areas such as Niagara, St Catharines, Hamilton, Windsor, Amherstburg, Sandwich, Chatham, Toronto, and London (Walker,1979:17-20).

This rapid increase in numbers strained the existing resources; the need for food, clothing, shelter, and jobs was overwhelming. Frustrations created by the needs of the new immigrants led to an increase in anti-Black attitudes and hostile actions by Whites. Blacks from their first
arrival were generally ill-housed and concentrated in the poorest parts of the city. Moreover, in 1849 a new statute legalized segregated schools in Canada by authorizing municipal councils to establish separate schools for Blacks (Woolfson, 1977:90-91). All these circumstances relegated Blacks to a cycle of poverty, dependence as well as a separate and unequal existence in the 'promised land.'

Benevolent and philanthropic societies, including the American Missionary Association, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada provided aid. Several Whites and Blacks recommended the establishment of all-Black communal settlements; they would provide assistance with adjustment and offer protection from an increasingly hostile Canadian society.

The idea proved controversial from its inception. Supporters, like Henry Bibb, influential editor of the first Black newspaper in Canada, the Voice of the Fugitive, felt such Black settlements would promote unity and cultural strength which would translate into Black political and economic independence. Opponents, like Mary Ann Shadd, felt the settlements would promote isolation and ignorance, arguing that Black independence and self-reliance could only be guaranteed by full integration into Canadian society. She and others challenged the support

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from philanthropic individuals and societies for these settlements, which implied a paternalistic commitment to the maintenance of White control and Black dependence.

Despite this opposition four major Black settlements appeared. In 1830, fugitives from Ohio established Wilberforce near London; in 1840, Josiah Henson and John Scoble organized the Dawn settlement in Dresden; in 1849, White Presbyterian Minister, William King set up the Elgin Settlement in Buxton; and in 1853, Henry Bibb organized the Refugee Home Society in Windsor.

Each settlement, with varying success, tried to create a self-contained and self-sustaining community with its own school, church and economic base. Since funding for each settlement came from external sources in the White community, Black self-reliance was never a reality. In fact all the settlements suffered because of inadequate funding. Moreover, the constant need to solicit funds in the White community renewed Black and White antagonism towards the settlements.

Some Blacks provided vocal objection to the practices of the settlement. In a May 2, 1857 editorial in the Provincial Freeman Mary Ann pointed out that a "great injury [was] done to colored people, by Mr Henson's self-assured character of a public benefactor and authorized beggar for them" (1). For many, begging was not only improper, but it also lowered one's dignity and indicated that Blacks could not be financially independent.
(Silverman, 1985: 59).

While some Whites were completely in support of isolating Blacks in settlements, others vehemently objected. A petition, signed by 377 (20%) of the residents of the Raleigh and Chatham communities, was submitted to the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada. The petitioners stated that the presence of Black settlements in the area negatively affected the moral, social and economic conditions of the surrounding communities. In other words, property values decreased, better qualified European immigrants faced unfair competition in the job market, and Blacks displayed vicious and ungovernable behaviour.

It became apparent that while some White Canadians vocally denounced slavery in the United States, they preferred that freedom for Blacks did not take place in their own back yard. Resistance initially founded on fear was fed by racism (Silverman, 1985: 62-65). As the number of fugitive slaves continued to rise, anti-Black advocates became increasingly vocal. The scale of the initial post-emancipation wave of immigrants paled in comparison to the numbers that came after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in the United States in 1850.

The creators of the Fugitive Slave Act were trying to forge a compromise to prevent conflict between slave and free states. Those who supported the act agreed that there would be nationwide support for the recapture and return of any runaway slaves, regardless of their current status. As
long as a claim was presented to a judge, any Black could be considered a runaway slave. As a result, no Black was truly free or safe in the free Northern states.

Historians estimate that in the month following the passage of the act, over three thousand Blacks crossed into Canada; by 1860 more than forty thousand more followed. The overwhelming majority moved into existing Black communities in Upper Canada (Walker, 1979: 20-21). While this represents a significant number, hundreds of thousands more remained trapped on Southern slave plantations.

Despite the obvious dangers many free Blacks returned to slave territories to covertly spread the word about Canada and to assist others who wanted to be free. Josiah Henson and the more famous Harriet Tubman were only two of the many brave individuals who risked their lives to secure a collective freedom. Josiah Henson assisted over one hundred and eighteen slaves into Canada and Harriet Tubman helped to free over three hundred slaves by making nineteen trips to the South. These two, and others like them, both Black and White, developed and mastered a complex and secret trail of barns, cellars, churches, woodsheds and caves—stations of the Underground Railroad. Through this network hundreds of fugitives were conducted to freedom in Canada (Walker, 1979:23-25).

By the 1860s, however, the novelty of fugitive slaves had decreased and Whites now became even more resentful of the presence of Blacks. Though once welcomed, Blacks now
had to endure openly racist and discriminatory Jim Crow practices. They were not allowed to enter White churches, hotels, housing areas or to seek most kinds of employment. The failure of the Black communal settlements, the rapid increase in numbers, and the persistence of racism made "the dream of the Canadian Utopia a nightmare, as blacks, theoretically free, found themselves increasingly unwelcome" (Silverman, 1985: 73).

This anti-Black sentiment appeared openly in the White press. As the Black population increased so too did the intensity of the racist attacks in print. Papers such as the Toronto Colonist, the Hamilton Spectator and the Canada Oak, expressed their anti-Black views unequivocally. Editorials, letters, and advertisements consistently fuelled White frustrations. These publications presented Blacks simply as liabilities offering nothing of value to Canadian society. The Toronto Colonist even supported a poll tax to limit the huge migration of Blacks into Canada. One editorial stated that "fugitive slaves are by no means a desirable class of immigrants for Canada, especially when they come in large numbers...many of whom are woefully depraved by their former mode of life" (quoted in Silverman, 1985: 106-107).

Letters to the editor by Blacks seldom found their way into newspapers and therefore had little impact on White public opinion or Black alienation. The struggle for a greater inclusion in the White Canadian Press paralleled
the struggle for greater inclusion in Canadian society and for increased self-determination. The only viable alternative lay in the creation of a Black Canadian Press.

**The Black Press in Canada, 1850-1861**

We assert that the principle is wrong that asserts that colored men [and women] may not be engaged in controversy with each other without injuring their cause. So far as it fixes anything, it asserts that we should remain silent and dumb in our present condition (William Whipper quoted in Hutton, 1992: 3)

With the publication of *Freedom's Journal* in 1827, Jamaican-born John Browne Russworm became North America's first Black editor. *Freedom's Journal* set the precedent for hundreds of other Black periodicals then and now. Wink (1971) credits the *British American* as the first Canadian 'Negro' newspaper but goes on to point out that the only proof of its existence is references made in the *Hamilton Bee* (394). The *Voice of the Fugitive* is widely accepted as Canada's first Black newspaper. Under the editorship of Henry Bibb, the *Voice of the Fugitive* appeared between 1851 and 1853 in Sandwich and Windsor. Its immediate competitor, the *Provincial Freeman* was launched in 1853 with Samuel Ringwold Ward19 listed as its owner and editor. At

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19Ward was born into slavery in 1817, soon after his parents escaped with him to New York. Ward received an education because of the sponsorship of a wealthy White benefactor, Gerrit Smith. He later became a Presbyterian minister, the pastor of a White congregation in South Butler, New York. He was an eloquent and outspoken leader in the northern abolitionist movement. With the passage of the Fugitive Slave law he moved to Canada West in 1852. He
different times its offices were located in Toronto, Chatham and Windsor. The paper was published regularly until 1857; sporadic issues appeared until 1859 (Wink, 1971: 394-397).

Two other Black-oriented newspapers were published in Canada West. In 1856 J.J. Linton, a White Presbyterian abolitionist, began publishing the *Voice of the Bondsman* in Stratford. He created the paper as a forum for his critique of the problems of the Presbyterian church. He was only able to publish two issues of the paper before he gave up, recognizing that he did not have an adequate market to survive. In 1860, Reverend A. R. Green, the White leader of the new British Methodist Episcopal Church, began publishing the *True Royalist and Weekly Intelligencer* in Windsor. The paper targeted the Black community but did not focus on issues of race; instead it promoted allegiance to the Queen and political conservatism. The paper ceased publication thirteen months later in 1861 after producing only ten editions (Silverman, 1985: 119).

While the *Voice of the Bondsman* and the *True Royalist and Weekly Intelligencer* were defined as Black-oriented journals, the *Voice of the Fugitive* and the *Provincial Freeman* were the two most representative and sustained voices of, for and by Blacks. The *Voice of the Bondsman* became the travelling spokesperson for the Anti-Slavery Society of Canada. Ward shared Mary Ann’s political commitment to integration, independence and challenging Black settlements (Bearden and Butler, 1977: 93-101).
and the *True Royalist* and *Weekly Intelligencer* were exclusively financed and controlled by White religious organizations. Their messages did not challenge the racist ideology of the society; instead they encouraged a conservative acceptance of the status quo. On the other hand, the *Voice of the Fugitive* and the *Provincial Freeman* were committed to proactive social changes; they rejected the racist norms and encouraged Black political involvement.

**Henry Bibb and the *Voice of the Fugitive***

Henry Bibb was born a slave in Kentucky in 1815. As was typical in slavery, Bibb saw all of his family members sold to other plantations; he himself was sold six times. After six attempts, he finally escaped in 1842 and fled to Detroit. Drawing on his own experience, he spoke out against slavery and eventually in 1849 published his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (Wink, 1971: 205).

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act forced Bibb and his new bride Mary to join other fugitives in Canada West. The Bibbs immediately became active participants in their new community in Chatham and later Sandwich. They established the *Voice of the Fugitive*, started a day school for Black children, helped to build the Methodist church and assisted in starting several educational, temperance
and antislavery societies.

The *Voice of the Fugitive* was Bibb's most significant accomplishment. On January 1, 1851 shortly after arriving in Canada, he published the first edition of the newspaper, in which he outlined his editorial policy, a reflection of his own political philosophy:

We expect, by the aid of a good Providence, to advocate the cause of human liberty in the true meaning of that term. We shall advocate the immediate and unconditional abolition of chattel slavery everywhere, but especially on the American soil. We shall also persuade, as far as it may be practicable, every oppressed person of color in the United States to settle in Canada, where laws make no distinction among men, based on complexion, and upon whose soil "no slave can breathe." We shall advocate the claims of the American slaves to the Bible, from whom it has ever been withheld. We shall advocate the cause of Temperance and moral reform generally. The cause of education shall have a prominent space in our columns. We shall advocate the claims of agricultural pursuits among our people, as being the most certain road to independence and self-respect...(1)

He went on in his editorial to further commit himself to filling the void that existed for Blacks in Canada by uncompromisingly speaking on all subjects which pertained to the Black community. To those with differing views he asked for "toleration of opinion and free discussion" (1)

In response to the negative characterizations in the White press, the *Voice of the Fugitive* warned that these racist views were all the more dangerous because they

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20Microfilm copies of the *Voice of the Fugitive* (January 1, 1851-December 16, 1852) are available in the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library.
represented views present in the larger White society. The activities of the Underground Railroad were featured in the bi-monthly issues with lists of new arrivals prominently published. Bibb made very generous use of borrowed news items from the United States, particularly articles focused on slavery and the abolitionist movement.

This cross-border sharing of information gave the *Voice of the Fugitive* an international character and focus. The *Voice of the Fugitive* had subscribers in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and New Hampshire. After its first year it was estimated that circulation exceeded 1100 subscribers (Silverman, 1985: 110). Bibb recognized the scope of his audience, so he devoted many editorials to encouraging American Blacks to migrate to Canada West. He believed that with larger numbers Blacks could more successfully oppose White Canadian prejudice, since the Canadian environment was more favorable than the entrenched and hostile institution of slavery in the United States.

To help bring about this migration Bibb organized the North American Convention of Colored People in Toronto on September 9-11, 1851. The July 16, 1851 edition of the *Voice of the Fugitive* not only stated the theme of the convention, "What is the future of the Black race on the North American Continent?," but also included the entire agenda. Bibb very unashamedly used his newspaper as a platform for his political ideal: creating an international organization of Black people (Hite, 1974: 275). With fifty
Black delegates in attendance at the convention Bibb was successful in having a resolution passed supporting his "league of colored people." In a series of editorials Bibb outlined the ideas of the league, hoping to increase Black acceptance of separatist ideas. Bibb believed that Black equality would be best served by complete separation from White Canadian society. To achieve this he proposed that the league purchase land in both Canada and the Caribbean to produce agricultural products that would eventually rival those of the Southern agricultural economy (*Voice of the Fugitive*, September 24, 1851: 2).

Bibb recognized the need for Black economic independence but his ideas never gained wide acceptance. First, his readership was limited and most Blacks were more accepting than he of integrationist and assimilationist views that stressed the need for equal partnership in Canadian society; to them, Bibb's militancy could only produce increased hostility from Whites. More militant separatists, on the other hand, dismissed his ideas as utopian and favored repatriation as a solution to the racism facing Blacks in the Americas (Silverman, 1985: 113).

While the North American Agricultural League did not materialize, Bibb succeeded in establishing the Refugee Home Society, which shared some of the ideals of the League. The Society purchased 2000 acres of land with public contribution and government funding, and sold
twenty-five acre plots to Blacks with no down payments required and extended payment plans.

While his political views curtailed his subscribership, Bibb's greatest setback was the destruction of his printing office by fire in 1853. Undaunted, he continued to publish a one-page edition of the paper. His influence was even more seriously undermined by the introduction of the Provincial Freeman in March 1853 by his nemesis, Mary Ann Shadd. By the time of his death in 1854, at 39, the Voice of the Fugitive had ceased publication (Silverman, 1985: 113).

The Provincial Freeman

The introduction of the Provincial Freeman was systematically planned and executed with the formation of a Committee of Publication to oversee its production. The members of this group were listed in the Provincial Freeman's first edition. It included Reverend Samuel R. Ward, the editor; Reverend Alex McArthur, corresponding editor; and seven other notable men from across the province. Noticeably present was Mary Ann Shadd who had no title listed; instead, the first page of the first issue bore a notice that: "Letters must be addressed, Post-paid

21In 1958 author Alex Murray discovered a bound volume of the Provincial Freeman at the University of Pennsylvania. This volume contained copies from March 24, 1853-September 15, 1857. Prior to this all copies of the journal were believed to have been destroyed.
to Mary A. Shadd, Windsor, Canada West."

The first issue of the Provincial Freeman also carried a variety of articles including: an introductory letter from Samuel Ward and a reprinted article, "The Power of Caste" by the Reverend Pennington of New York City, describing how he was denied entry to a public bus because he was Black. This issue also contained a discussion of the pros and cons of the Refugee Home Society; investigative coverage of the death of a member of the Windsor Debating Society; a reprinted address given by Harriet Beecher Stowe to Glasgow Female New Association for the Abolition of Slavery; and a series of poems and other articles of general interest. This introductory issue was produced to determine the need for and the acceptance of the newspaper by the Black community. For the next year Mary Ann travelled across Canada West and the northern United States to assess public response and to recruit subscribers.

The objective of the Provincial Freeman was clearly stated by Mary Ann in an article titled "Prospectus" in its second edition:

"The Provincial Freeman will be devoted to Anti-slavery, Temperance and General Literature. The organ of no particular political party it will open its columns to the views of any of different political opinions, reserving the right as an independent Journal of full expression asking questions of projects affecting the people...not committed to the views of any religious sect exclusively it will respectfully observe the right of every sect...(March 25, 1854:3)."
She also outlined the reasons for creating the *Provincial Freeman*. The new paper existed to inform the class of well-educated Blacks on issues affecting them as a group; to refute the lies about the plight of Blacks in Canada; and to educate Blacks in the United States about the situation in Canada so that they too could make a decision about possible migration. Most importantly, the founders of the *Provincial Freeman* intended it to be a mouthpiece keeping the Black population informed on political issues so as to increase the political activism and influence of the community. Clearly, Mary Ann had no respect for the editorial work done by Henry Bibb (Murray, 1959: 27).

The motto of *The Provincial Freeman* was "Self-Reliance is the True Road to Independence," but Mary Ann was not an advocate of a separatist philosophy. She very strongly advocated the elimination of separate schools, churches and settlements. In her articles and editorials she emphasized that Blacks should focus on:

measures for such improvement as shall make them independent, self-sustaining laborers,[proving] the fitness of the slaves for freedom...and the perfect capability of the negro to live and to advance under the same government and upon terms of political and social and equality with the anglo-saxon race or any other of the one great human family...rebuk[ing] those who once held them as chattel... (March 25, 1854, 2).

The *Provincial Freeman* expressed criticism of organizations or individuals who went out begging Whites for funds to support their activities. In the December 27, 1856 editorial she encouraged readers to:
Speak through papers not in the begging interest, to the generous donors who pockets are being relieved of gold, and whose generosity is thus abused by the horde of long-faced pretenders of piety and brotherly regard for the 'poor colored man,' who make incessant appeal to help this 'mission' or that other 'institution' (1).

The paper was equally critical of those who forwarded separatist views; such groups were investigated and their corruption revealed to the community. One such victim was the Dawn Institute led by Josiah Henson. In a series of articles the Institute was challenged to account for the thousands of dollars received by begging, since its buildings were deteriorating and its programs were not proceeding as expected (Provincial Freeman, August 25 & November 5, 1854, May 12 & October 20, 1855).

Although the Provincial Freeman's commitment to assimilationist views enjoyed popular support, this did not translate into an increase in circulation. In 1857, the paper was forced to cease publication because it could not secure the minimum of three thousand subscribers needed to sustain the publication; however, irregular issues continued to appear until 1859.

Despite their flaws, The Voice of the Fugitive, and The Provincial Freeman contributed significantly to the lives of Blacks in Canada West. They voiced the frustrations and aspirations of the community, provided encouragement, and recommended varying actions to secure Black independence. Both newspapers satisfied the community's need for information about itself as well as
Black communities elsewhere, whose improvements and achievements they highlighted. Furthermore, they also provided a buffer from the consistent negativity of the White press.

Both Black newspapers functioned as the conscience of Black and humanitarian Whites, yet both failed because of lack of financial support. Their culturally specific commitment to uplifting the Black community may have contributed to their demise because subscriptions from the much larger, wealthier, and more educated White community were minimal. Though supportive of the existence of a Black press, the much smaller number of literate Blacks with the funds to contribute, could not sustain them.

Though short-lived, both provided an invaluable service to the Black community then and now. Led by idealistic editors, the newspapers confronted important issues and problems, showcased the best of the community, and inspired hope. They were not one-dimensional, but rather riddled with the complexities and contradictions of a community trying to democratically and freely define itself. Today both serve as unique documentation of the lives and views of people and events that have helped to define our current realities.
CHAPTER FOUR
BLACK FEMINIST ANALYSIS

Mary Ann Shadd in Words and Action

Well educated, vivacious...resolute and determined, and you might as well attempt to remove a stone wall with your little finger, as to check in what she conceives to be her right and duty (Bearden and Butler, 1977: 9).

Mary Ann Shadd’s role as a newspaper woman was distinctive. She was the pioneer who defined the territory for Black women and Black men. She actively supported the political rights of the Black community, and was equally concerned about the fate of Black women. Through her struggles inherent contradictions and ironies were exposed. That is, while the struggle for emancipation offered a unique opportunity for Black and White women and men to work together, it replicated all the existing societal, racial, and sexual tensions (Yee, 1992: 1). This chapter will explore and provide an analysis of these tensions as they are manifested in Mary Ann’s work in support of the Provincial Freeman.

Early Definitions

Mary Ann Camberton Shadd was born on October 9, 1823 in Wilmington, Delaware. She was the oldest of thirteen children born to Harriet Parnell Shadd and Abraham Doras
She was born into one of the few free Northern Black families. Her father had inherited part of an estate valued at $1300 from his father, and was also a successful shoemaker; by the 1830s his accumulated real property was valued at $5000.

Abraham Shadd's commitment to the abolitionist movement had a significant impact on all 13 children. Through his example "he educated his children on their responsibilities to the community as well as about abolitionist ideology" (Yee, 1992: 5). Mary Ann would later echo many of her father's public advocacy and political messages including: anti-slavery, integration, self-reliance, emigration and education.

Education was a priority to Abraham Shadd, the first step on the road to self-sufficiency, and because Delaware denied free Black children admission into publicly funded schools, the family moved to West Chester, Pennsylvania. It was there that Mary Ann attended Price's Boarding School run by the Quaker Society of Friends. At 16, after only 6 years of schooling, Mary Ann returned to Delaware to open a school for Black children. For the next 11 years she taught not only in Delaware, but also in New York City, and in Pennsylvania at West Chester and Norristown. She took

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Abraham Shadd was the only Black to win elective office in Canada West before the American Civil War. He was elected in 1858 to the Raleigh Township Commission and took his seat on the Town Council in 1859 (Bearden and Butler, 1977: 198).
with her her father's commitment to education, thrift and hard work, as well as the belief that Blacks must help themselves and each other in order to achieve racial equality.

In 1849 at age 26, she published her first written work, a pamphlet titled *Hints to the Colored People of the North* which pointed out the problems of Black imitation of what she termed "the conspicuous materialism of whites" (quoted in Litwack and Meier, 1988: 88). In the same work she also began to explore the political themes that she sustained throughout her life: Black Independence, Self sufficiency, Self Reliance and Self-Respect.

**Life in the 'Promised Land'**

In September 1851, at the age of 28, she moved to Toronto. Some historians suggest she migrated alone while others indicate that she was accompanied by her brother Isaac.\(^2\) Like other free Northern Blacks, Mary Ann realized that the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act would reduce or even eliminate some freedoms gained, and would continue to legitimize the enslavement of Blacks.

In Toronto she immediately became politically involved in the Black community and quickly gained the respect of

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\(^2\) This is indicative of the fragmented nature of the historical sources. Information about other members of her family appear more frequently after the establishment of the *Provincial Freeman*. If she migrated alone it would be consistent with her disregard throughout her life of social expectations for women.
many. In her first month, she was the secretary at a "convention of distinguished gentlemen," including Martin Delany and Henry Bibb. This convention, organized by Bibb, was held to discuss the implications of the Fugitive Slave Act and Black migration and the future of Blacks on the North American continent.

This meeting was significant for two reasons. First, it facilitated Mary Ann's immediate political involvement in Canada; here she began her uncompromising struggle for the social and political integration of Blacks in Canadian society. In addition the September Convention immediately exposed Mary Ann to the separatist ideology of Bibb and Delany, an ideology that severely contradicted her integrationist posture. This ideological conflict would lead to a bitter and personal struggle with Henry Bibb.

`Freewoman' vs 'Fugitive'

While Bibb supported Black independence via separate and segregated institutions, Mary Ann believed independence, self-reliance and equality could only be achieved through integration. She contended that racial separation maintained and perpetuated ignorance between the races. Her integrationist philosophy was not popular, especially among the Black male leadership. In the July 15, 1852 edition of the *Voice of the Fugitive* Bibb classified her as a 'deluded sister' who gave 'aid and comfort' to the enemies of the Black community.

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The different personal experiences of both individuals helped to define the differences in their opinions as well as their political priorities and approaches. Mary Ann was a Black educated woman from a middle class and free Northern family, while Henry Bibb was a self-educated, Black male fugitive from slavery. Although the cocoon of Mary Ann's family life had not made her immune to racism and the realities of slavery, her privileged position had denied her direct experiential access to its dehumanizing brutality. This is not to suggest that these were the only lines that demarcated their political philosophy and participation. Although both conflict and cooperation characterized their relationship and their approaches differed, their goal was the same--challenging and eliminating racial discrimination.

Black Women's Political Life: Lifting as We Climb

Mary Ann's early involvement held implications for women's political involvement. Her presence at the Convention was facilitated by a community that seemingly welcomed the participation of women in the struggle for racial equality. Women were further misled a year later at the Chatham Convention where a resolution was passed that stated:

We regard female sympathy in the cause of freedom and humanity, to be of the most vital importance, and that we hereby most earnestly solicit the aid and cooperation of our sisters in the elevation of the race (Voice of the Fugitive, March 21,
1852).

While this statement may seem progressive, women’s participation was not fundamentally integrated in the movement. They were relegated to a ‘woman’s sphere’ in women’s auxiliaries and other all-female organizations. However, this rigid demarcation did not stop their involvement. Through individual efforts and group participation they provided desperately needed support and leadership. Although Mary Ann held membership and leadership in women’s organizations, like the Colored Women’s Progressive Franchise Association, she refused to be limited to those areas of participation.

Mary Ann directly challenged the sexist assumptions of Black leaders like Henry Bibb. Their political feud was played out in the *Voice of the Fugitive*, the newspaper run by Bibb with persistent letters to the editor by Mary Ann. As its editor and publisher Bibb was in complete control of their public debate. However her outspokenness as a woman as well as her willingness to challenge did not go unnoticed. Henry Bibb responded with this critique in *The Voice of the Fugitive*: "Miss Shadd has said and writes many things we think will add nothing to her credit as a lady" In her opposition and critique of his philosophical position she had overstepped the boundaries prescribed for women, who were expected to defer to male authority. He did not view her as a political opponent; she was a woman.
transgressing the male domain (Yee, 1992: 71-72).

Mary Ann grew increasingly frustrated with her inability to widely express and control her own ideas on the issues, so in 1852 she published her second pamphlet, *A Plea for Emigration, or Notes of Canada West, in its Moral, Social and Political Aspect: with Suggestions Respecting Mexico, West Indies, and Vancouver Island, for the Information of Colored Emigrants*. In this work she elaborated on her emigrationist philosophy, and also provided information on land cost, agricultural potential, climate, and the Canadian electoral process. She emphasized the absence of slave laws, and prevailed on Blacks to emigrate to Canada in order to "integrate with free people under the protection of British Law" (36). The pamphlet received a decidedly positive review in the *Voice of the Fugitive*:

> Considering the paucity of documents of reliable information that it was possible for her to have access to, Miss Shadd has certainly accomplished wonders. The information concentrated within the small compass of this pamphlet, collected by extensive correspondence, personal examination of society, and reference to the laws of the Province, was truly no small task; and ably has she accomplished her undertaking (June 17, 1852: 2).

Henry Bibb was able to applaud her work because it did not offer a critique of his position and authority but offered support of his commitment to emigration.
The Provincial Freeman in Operation

Because on the one hand, Mary Ann was not one to acquiesce to presumed authority, and on the other hand, she needed a more active role in the other political discussions of the community, she decided that another newspaper was needed to counteract the influence of Henry Bibb. In March 1853 the first issue of the Provincial Freeman was released. The first Masthead read "Union is Strength," but all subsequent Mastheads would read "Self Reliance is the True Road to Independence," a declaration of her political commitment.

The newspaper listing declared Samuel Ward its editor. Knowing the gender politics of society and the parameters placed on women's participation, Mary Ann had no official title. Their primary funding came from public subscriptions so initial care was taken not to directly challenge sexist norms. However all letters to the Provincial Freeman were to be sent to her attention. Because Ward spent much of his time travelling to raise funds and gain support for the abolitionist cause, his real role with the paper was the prominence of his name. The main task of editing was left to Mary Ann.

Speaking engagements exposed Mary Ann to a wider audience and gave her the opportunity to promote the Provincial Freeman and gain subscribers. As a public speaker she was one of the pioneers. Only 20 years earlier, in 1833, Maria M. Stewart was the first American
woman, Black or White, to present a formal lecture in public. Since that time, women had risked being assaulted and causing riots whenever they wished to publicly express their views (Lerner, 1972: 83).

Publication was suspended for a year after the first issue, so that Mary Ann could travel across the U.S. and Canada to lecture and raise funds for the paper. She resumed publication in 1854, moving the production to Toronto where there was a higher concentration of Blacks. When the Provincial Freeman returned on March 25, 1854 on page one it now stated, "during the absence of the Editor letters should be addressed to M.A. Shadd..." Mary Ann no longer used her name, but instead opted for the more gender neutralising initials. The decision was possibly based on some of the more negative experiences of her lecture tour. "Anti-Black feelings, anti-abolitionist sentiments and hatred of 'public women', "made women like Mary Ann vulnerable to verbal and physical attacks. Public speaking and writing were male domains and women were traditionally barred from such intellectual expressions (Yee, 1992: 113).

The Provincial Freeman and the Woman's Role

The Provincial Freeman and its editor consistently broke traditional customs and supported women who did the same. Women's involvement in the abolition struggle on all levels was documented by the Provincial Freeman. For example, the April 15, 1854 issue highlighted the following
report: "Mrs Douglas has been released from prison, in Norfolk, where she had been imprisoned for teaching colored children to read" (2). The same issue also spoke of Miss Delia Webster of Kentucky as constantly being jailed for assisting escaped slaves.

At every opportunity Mary Ann made mention of women's political presence in communities throughout Canada West. For example in late July 1854, at political rally in Chatham, she was allowed to speak about the paper. In her subsequent report of the event she pointed out that she "saw quite a large number of females. I like that new feature in political gatherings and you will agree with me that much of the austerity of such assemblies will be softened by their presence" (Provincial Freeman, August 5, 1854: 2). Thus she not only showed support for women already politically involved, but also suggested the possibility and need for more participation by women.

She expressed similar optimism after another tour:

This [increased presence of Black women] was a hopeful sign when one calls to remembrance the apathy of our females generally and especially in the great City of Toronto, until very recently. If there is any one thing that tends to intensify one's contempt for the Muslin multitude, it is the nothingness the delicate creatures display when invited to aid in a work for the general good. You would be surprised at the pains they take to impress you with their feebleness (October 21, 1854: 2).

Here is a clear indication of Mary Ann's perspective of a woman's sphere, not one of docile gentility but active political participation.
Her coverage was not limited to Black women, however, for she maintained her commitment to women's equality regardless of race. Reports of the activities of White women were integrated into the pages of the Provincial Freeman, not simply as occasional highlights but whenever they indicated a commitment to universal human dignity. Thus, on March 17, 1855 she reported on the lecture of White feminist, Lucy Stone:

...she held forth to crowed audiences on the subject of 'WOMAN'S RIGHTS,' or as very successfully shown by Miss Stone, Human Rights...Her numerous admirers will take hope...in the certainty that in Toronto, with the strong attachment to antiquated notions respecting woman and her sphere, so prevalent, she was listened to patiently, applauded abundantly, and patronized extensively--the St. Lawrence Hall being literally packed...All we were disappointed at was so few of the colored people seized upon the occasion to learn lessons of practical wisdom (1).

Mary Ann recognized there was a connection between women's oppression and racial oppression and that White feminists could offer positive contributions and insights to the struggle for equality. As she supported the works of feminists so too did she receive support in turn. The newspaper was fortunate to receive generous donations from feminists such as Lucretia Mott. In the July 8, 1854 issue an article titled, "Women's Labor" made mention of women's custom of disguising their writings by using male pseudonyms. The article went on to suggest that "Ere long the time will come to claim them as a woman's" (3). Only a few weeks later, frustrated by the constant referrals to
Brother Shadd, Mr Shadd, Mr Editor, and Mr Freeman Mary Ann wrote that the public's "misapprehension when addressing is as are many besides a mistake occasioned, no doubt, by the habit we have of using initials, we would simply correct for the future, our error, by giving here, the name in full, (Mary A. Shadd) as we do not like the Mr. and Esq., by which we are so often addressed" (August 26, 1854: 2). By the next issue, readers had responded by addressing correspondence to "Madam Editor" or "Editress."

**Mary Ann, Race, Gender and Community Response**

Mary Ann's pen was intimidated by no one including the renowned Mr Fredrick Douglas. In the May 27, 1854 issue she requested that readers in different communities consider supporting "bazaars, festivals, tea-meetings and similar gatherings" to promote and raise funds for the * Provincial Freeman* (2). When she later discovered that a bazaar had been planned by the Ladies Association for the Relief of the Colored Fugitives, to take place in Toronto in support of the *Frederick Douglas Paper* published in Rochester, she launched an attack on Douglas and his Canadian supporters. Mary Ann disagreed with Douglas' anti-emigration position, adding that his paper was more established and financially secure than the *Provincial Freeman* which was still struggling to publish weekly. Her critical coverage of his speech pointedly stated he was "generally admitted to be spiritless...not adapting his
remarks to local tastes" (June 3, 10 and 24, 1854).

Example of Shadd’s feistiness are sprinkled throughout the journal. "Prepare to subscribe, friends, and not friends, and get up a few meetings. We will visit you. 'Meeting'?—Yes, do not be frightened, timid people will not get hurt, even" (July 1, 1854: 3).

Arriving in Windsor in early July, 1854 Mary Ann attended a meeting organized by local supporters to publicize the paper. Present at the meeting was John Scoble, the Englishman who now administered the activities at the Dawn settlement. Because of Mary Ann’s own very public attacks on the settlement Scoble choose to denounce the Provincial Freeman and Mary Ann. Mary Ann wrote of this encounter:

Imposing scene! Mr John Scoble, the would-be member for Peel, or anywhere, if you please, trying to do battle against a negro woman, in a log schoolhouse at Dawn!...But the people were uninfluenced: the conflict was so terrible and...the attack unprovoked, that even an Indian\(^{24}\) present was compelled to speak out... (July 22, 1854: 1).

Mary Ann blurred racial and gender boundaries. The racist and sexist codes of behaviour dictated that Blacks deferred to Whites and women deferred to men. Mary Ann was a Black woman who refused to humbly subsume to White male authority.

\(^{24}\)From the editions available and clearly legible there were very few references to 'Indians'. But in this situation not only was he present at a meeting targeting the Black community he was given a platform to speak in defense of Mary Ann, suggesting an amiable relationship.
Instead her acid pen was also directed at the American Missionary Association, a former financial supporter of her school\(^\text{25}\). When she learned that a new young woman had been hired by the Association to teach in Windsor, she wrote:

Is Miss Martin [W]hite, we are curious to know? If so, she will doubtless fare well at the hands of the American Missionary Association. Should she be so unfortunate as to have a different complexion, and at the same time claim a rational share of independence of thought, while acting under their patronage, we would not answer for her permanent support by them. Some of the A.M.A. deals summarily with ‘its colored help’ when unwilling to be mere machines, as we have known to our cost—and woe betide Miss Martin...should she claim a right to an opinion on matters of general interest (June 24, 1854: 2).

This time her attack was against a White, male, religious, and philanthropic organization. She charged them with being both racist and sexist, and for silencing the views of especially Black women in their employ. Her charges support some views in the Black community that many White abolitionists while agitating for an end to slavery did not necessarily advocate racial equality. This opinion gained wider support in the Black community after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act which confirmed the lack of commitment of White northerners to Black equality.

The October 28, 1854 issue of the Provincial Freeman

\(^{25}\)Mary Ann continued to teach when she arrived in Canada West. She ran an integrated school in an abandoned military barracks in Windsor. The school was integrated in theory only since Whites sent their children to better equipped government funded schools. Mary Ann received funding from the American Missionary Association between 1851 and 1853 (Bearden and Butler, 1977: 43, 131).
no longer included the name of Samuel Ward. The decision was made to remove it because the newspaper had had no contact with him for several months. In addition, throughout his travels abroad Ward had raised neither funds nor subscribers to benefit the paper. While he had the opportunity to help he didn’t and therefore it became clear that he had very little interest in the success of the paper and devoted little or no time to its daily maintenance. Ironically, following the removal of his name, the paper received a small donation from him (Bearden & Butler, 1977:157-158).

Mary Ann and her sister Amelia, who had recently joined the staff, became its official though unnamed editors. Locally, the loss of Ward’s famous name had some implications for subscriptions and donations. His prestige and political position had lent credibility to the newspaper; knowledge of his disassociation meant a loss of subscribed funders. Mary Ann recognized that more had to be done to increase their funding; this meant more touring and lecturing. Leaving her sister in charge she spent more and more time on the road.

The impact of the editorial changes was in full effect by June 1855. The public responded negatively when it became known that two women ran the only remaining Black newspaper. Fearing the loss of subscribers and the closure of the newspaper, Mary Ann was forced to hire a male editor, Reverend William P. Newman. In an article
titled, "Adieu" she announced the changing role of the women at the newspaper; they will now content themself with active efforts to gain subscribers, not with its editorial. While she defined her new more 'palatable' supportive role, she also spoke of her active history with the paper from its inception:

When it was not, but said to be needed, we travelled to arouse a sentiment in favour of it, and from then until now, have worked for it, how well others must say, but, through difficulties, and opposed to obstacles such as we feel confident few, if any, females have had to contend against in the same business, except the sister who shared our labors for awhile; and now after such a familiar acquaintanceship with difficulties, of many shapes, in trying with a few others to keep it alive for one year, as at first promised, we present it in its second year...(August 22, 1855, 1).

In this 'final' editorial she directed her attention to Black women.

To colored women, we have a word--we have "broken the Editorial Ice," whether willing or not, for your class in America; so go to Editing, as many of you as are willing, and able and as soon as you may, if you think you are ready...(1).

Here it is clear that Mary Ann understood the significance of her role as an editor and she was not satisfied with her status as "the first" or "the only one." More involvement of women in the editorial field would also demystify it and make it more readily accessible to all women.

When the new male editor, Reverend William P. Newman, was hired, the paper's office was moved from Toronto to Chatham where a thriving Black community had developed. Her younger brother Isaac became the new subscription agent,
and the newspaper expanded its name to *Provincial Freeman and Weekly Advertiser*.

In his first editorial Williams showed an understanding of the sexist politics of the community and possibly the reason why he was chosen for the job. In the editorial he praised Mary Ann as:

...one of the best Editors our Province ever had, if such did wear the petticoats instead of the breeches--one that would be now blessing our country in the same capacity, but for the folly of adhering to a wrongly developed public sentiment, that would crush a woman, whenever she attempts to do what has hitherto been assigned to men, even though God designed her to do it (August 22, 1855: 1).

In a much later editorial, Black abolitionist H. T. Williams echoed similar sentiments:

Although this routine of business for a female looks masculine, in the eyes of some, and is sneered at by the same class...yet it is credible and praiseworthy, and never fails to produce a salutary effect. If Miss Shadd gained any new plumes to her wreath, she is fully deserving of them for her intrinsic value is not half known, nor appreciated by the people she has so faithfully served (March 1, 1856: 1).

These public pro-woman statements and commitments were not isolated. Mary Ann and other women who advocated a feminist perspective did receive widespread public recognition and support for their work to benefit the Black community. In Philadelphia a benefit was held to honor her and her role as the first Black woman in North American to establish and edit a weekly paper. Present were a racially mixed group of Black and White supporters who paid twenty five cents each to attend. Despite all the difficulties at
home Mary was obviously respected and well known internationally (Bearden & Butler, 1977: 182-185).

In some areas, the dominant sexist ideology was being redefined with the recognition of the contributions of women, like Mary Ann, to the human rights struggle. Although throughout her career, her commitment to the Black community was central, she did not divide her struggles into an either-or dichotomy. Her struggle for women's rights was inherent in her struggle for racial equality.

Marriage and Family Life

Although Mary Ann had achieved success in her public endeavours, her single marital status was of concern to some. When her sister Amelia got married in June 1855 to David Williamson, a watchmaker, a congratulatory letter by William Still was printed in the Provincial Freeman. In it he teased Mary Ann, then 31 years old, pointing out that "the Old Maid" should follow her sister's example, because she (Amelia) very ably carried out her responsibilities at the paper "under the shining prospects of this alliance" (June 16, 1855: 2). Still was suggesting to Mary Ann that she too could handle the demands of the paper and a husband simultaneously. Eventually, on January 3, 1856, she married Thomas F. Cary, a Toronto barber. By then she was 33 years old, decidedly old by ordinary standards. As in most areas of her life, here too she did not conform to popular standards.
There is little information documenting the courtship of Thomas and Mary Ann. The two may have met at the Emigration Convention in September 1851. Both were also involved in several organizations such as the Provincial Union, and Conventions against Black settlements. Thomas was also one of the early financial contributors to the Provincial Freeman (Bearden & Butler, 1977: 186).

Mary Ann inherited an instant family, since Cary had three children (Ann, 14, Thomas Jr., 11, and John, 7) from a previous marriage. But this did not radically alter her political commitment, end her extensive travelling or settle her into a life of domesticity; having children slowed but did not stop Mary Ann’s lecture tours. As a working mother, it was sometimes necessary for her children to accompany her in her travels. Fortunately, she also had a supportive extended family to provide assistance at home.

Mary Ann’s married life showed that she rejected the oppressive ideals of ‘true womanhood.’ Once married, ‘true women’

were to remain dependent on their husbands, because submission to husbands, fathers, and brothers, as perhaps the most feminine of women’s qualities, provided order in a household in which males held ultimate authority...‘true women’ were to exercise their virtues...never los[ing] sight of their familial responsibilities: housekeeping, childbearing and childrearing (Yee, 1992: 40).

Five months after her marriage, she was back on the road travelling to Chicago to raise funds for the now fledging Provincial Freeman, returning in June 1856. Their
marriage did not adhere to the usual social norms. Mary Ann was the more famous and politically powerful; Thomas was content in his role as a supportive husband. He stayed home, took care of the children when necessary and tended to his businesses; he had achieved some economic success as a barber with several shops and a bath house in Toronto. In the traditional sense he clearly controlled the family finances since Mary Ann’s finances were drained by the Provincial Freeman, so much so that on her fundraising tours, he sent her money for travel and boarding expenses, whenever he could (Bearden & Butler, 1977: 185-186).

Despite her middle class background, Mary Ann always worked to support herself, although financial support, first from her parents and later her husband, was always there. Without financial worries she was able to devote a great deal of time to the Provincial Freeman and other political activities, a privilege not afforded most Black women.

Soon after her marriage Mary Ann’s travel reports to the Provincial Freeman began to make references to "we" because she now travelled with H. Ford Douglas. We are later introduced to Douglas when he is listed as one of the paper’s editors. It is not clear if in his role as travelling companion he was acting in his professional capacity or he was formally escorting the new Mrs Cary.

A new editorial triumvirate was made public in the May 17, 1856 Provincial Freeman. The masthead listed Mary A.
Shadd, Isaac D. Shadd and H. Ford Douglas as joint editors. Not only was this the first time that Mary Ann was listed as an editor for the paper, she also chose to use her maiden name. Considering the earlier negative public response to a woman editor, listing her name was a bold move; but this time the response was more accepting. The new public attitude may have been in recognition of Mary Ann’s international appeal and support—a fact widely reported in the paper. The second possible explanation may have been the presence of the two men, which meant she was not being given total control. The addition of these two men made her titled inclusion politically possible.

The decision to use her maiden name took advantage of her political reputation, and it also speaks to our contemporary discussions of naming and self-definition. First, the name Mary Ann Shadd defined a distinctive political history, a history totally intertwined with the political identity of the Provincial Freeman. Her decision to continue that public association is testimony to her political astuteness and uncompromising commitment. Second, the radicalism of her choice then, to use her maiden name, is even more poignant and impressive because 150 years later it is still considered a radical political statement when married women make the decision to use their maiden name.
Committed to the Very End

Over the next year, several causes accelerated the newspaper's downward spiral. First, a decision was made to move into a bigger offices but this proved costly and led to a four-month lapse in publication. Second, the paper was also a victim of a depressed economy. The struggle to continue the publication was increasingly difficult. Finally, Mary Ann was also forced to limit her own active involvement because of her first pregnancy. This effectively curtailed her ability to travel and recruit funds and subscribers as usual. After the birth of her daughter Sarah Elizabeth Cary on August 7, 1857 the paper was forced to cease publication, the final issue coming on September 20, 1857\textsuperscript{26} (Bearden & Butler, 1977: 205).

The end of the Provincial Freeman did not mean the end of Mary Ann's community activity. When after a lengthy illness her husband Thomas Cary died on November 29, 1860, with the assistance of her family Mary Ann was able to deal with single parenthood. In 1863 when Martin Delany hired her to assist in recruiting Black men for the Northern effort in the Civil war, she took the opportunity to make some much needed money and to get fully involved in the fight to end slavery.

With the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863,\footnote{Although no copies are available, it is suggested that Mary Ann and Isaac were able to occasionally produce limited editions until 1859.}
there was a mass exodus of Blacks out of Canada to the U.S. Their return was spurred by the need to find family and friends. Moreover, Blacks had also become disillusioned by the racism they encountered in Canada where they felt like exiles and intruders.

Mary Ann's vision of a Canadian promised land lost much of its idealism and she also returned to the United States. In 1868 she received a teaching certificate and taught school in Detroit. She later moved to Washington D.C., "the mecca of the Colored Pilgrim" (Mary Ann quoted in Bearden and Butler, 1977: 211). While she was no longer preoccupied with emigration as a method of empowerment, she retained her belief in racial advancement through education and Black self-reliance for full integration into society.

In 1869, at the age of 46, she became the first woman law student enroled at Howard University and in 1882, at the age of 60, Mary Ann received her law degree.\textsuperscript{27} Until her death in the summer of 1893 of rheumatism and cancer, Mary Ann Camberton Shadd-Cary remained true to her political commitments. Through it all her voice was heard and her ideas known.

\textsuperscript{27}Mary Ann had to wait fourteen years to receive her LL.B. because of the sexist practices of the university and the bar association. Even though she was allowed to enroll in classes they would not allow her to graduate.
CONCLUDING COMMENTARY

"...it is better to wear out, than to rust out"
(Mary Ann Shadd, quoted in Bearden and Butler, 1977: 231)

A few years ago I attended a presentation by Susan Crean, the author of Newsworthy: The Lives of Media Women. As did her book, the discussion centered on women’s participation in the media. I was one of two Black women in attendance. We went to her talk with the specific intention of asking Ms Crean about the absence of Black women or women of Color in her book.

The book’s title, and the author’s own introduction, suggest a discussion of women’s working experience in media. But throughout the text women of Color are invisible and the women as presented are ‘raceless.’ This narrowness in focus is problematic because an inclusive definition of the term ‘woman’ refers to a diversified group defined by, but not limited to, sexuality, class and race. In a society defined by a racist hegemony, however, the term ‘woman’ has been made synonymous with Whiteness. This "uniracial framework leads women’s historians, eager to expand their range, right into the trap of ‘women and minorities,’ a formula that accentuates rather than remedies the invisibility of women of Color" (Dubois and Ruiz, 1990: xi).

In addition, presenting the historical experience of White women in a ‘raceless’ context, limits their
definition to gender and class, thus producing an incomplete image of their lived experiences. Crean's work is a vivid example of this raceless analysis. In reality, her text is a historical documentation and analysis of the contribution of a select group of White media women who influenced the industry, and Crean's own experiences as a journalist. As she suggests in her introduction she did the research because:

I discovered that I had no sense of where women came into the history. I had no sense of there being a past to remember. Worse still, for all my commitment to nationalism and feminism...it didn’t occur to me...to ask the question: Where have we come from? (1985:7).

In her attempt to expand Canada’s historical and mass communication vision by including the active participation of women, she fails to integrate women’s diversity into her analysis. Her "we" turns out to be a pronoun of exclusion, not inclusion. This stark exclusion is widespread in the literature, therefore women of Color need to consistently present challenges to this and White women must regularly interrogate their privileged insider status.

We approached Ms Crean after her presentation to explore some of these theoretical and experiential understandings. We wanted to talk to her about the omissions as we perceived them. She first admitted her ignorance about Mary Ann Shadd and then insisted that one book cannot tell the whole story. We agreed, but her tone and mannerisms effectively ended our conversation. Again,
we as Black women were being silenced by an unwillingness to integrate other views into the historical dialogue.

The challenge for those who wish to redress the balance concerns not only the question of women's diversity, however, but also that of the historical domination by majorities of racial, ethnic and linguistic minorities. This thesis is itself a challenge of the dominant social construct that seeks to limit women's definitions, and joins a growing body of work, from varying perspectives, which self-consciously explores the complementarities and divergencies in women's histories. Without these new voices, our historical understanding will remain incomplete. This was forcefully brought home to me in my investigation of Mary Ann Shadd and her work in media.

Mary Ann Shadd, a Black woman, was the creative energy behind the Provincial Freeman. Without any doubt she was the first 'woman' in Canada--Black or White--to found and edit a newspaper. Historians of women's media history such as Crean would have us believe that Sara Jeannette Duncan, a writer for the Brantford Courier in 1879, was the first female newspaper writer, and Kit Coleman, the women's page editor for the Toronto Mail in 1884 the first female editor.

Although Mary Ann's pioneering efforts took place thirty years before the significant activities of these two White women, she is never similarly acknowledged and
integrated into the discussion of women's early achievements in Canada's media legacy. When authors do identify her, they consistently—even in feminist literature—give her only a passing reference in footnotes rather than a discussion in the main text.

I must then speculate that if Mary Ann Shadd had been White, she would have been more readily given her place in history. I argue that a sexist ideology denies all women, and a racist ideology Black women, and other women of Color, their full inclusion in the historical process. How else can this overt omission in White feminist and mass communication historiography be explained? Here racial loyalties and privilege take precedence over an egalitarian and contextual exploration of women's experiences.

The same ideological forces which attempt to limit our current access to the historical voice of Mary Ann also tried to limit her access to a political voice. But Mary Ann Camberton Shadd-Cary was an active participant in her world, constantly pushing the limits of convention. Social boundaries defined by race, gender or class could not limit her full participation in media or community politics. She was a woman of action who could not be silenced, although her social circumstances did affect her life and her work.

As we have seen, Mary Ann was born free to an influential Black middle class family. She was educated and politically outspoken. Her background not only gave her privileges not available to most Black men and women in
her community, but also added to the complexity and uniqueness of her family life, her political activism, and her career.

Family life in the free Black community of the 1850s took on contradictory characteristics as it tried to emulate dominant cultural values. That is, while for the first time Black men and women could freely exercise autonomy over their own lives, they were not immune from the pervasive values of White society. The traditional Eurocentric model of the family was "rooted in upperclass, White patriarchal prerogatives" (Collins, 1991: 46). This model created two separate and discrete worlds for men and women. Men occupied the public 'providing' sphere of economic and political authority, while women held the private 'nurturing' sphere of family and household responsibility (Collins, 1991: 46-47).

The experiences of free Black women and men did not fit this ideal. Instead, in the racialized society of Mary Ann's times, Black women were "active participants in efforts to help their families and communities and to secure racial equality," although their participation took place within socially prescribed parameters (Yee, 1992: 41). Mary Ann was one of many women who challenged all these rigid expectations of a woman's role in the family.

From early on in her political life and career Mary Ann did not make family life a priority. Not only did she wait until she was 33 to get married, she also delayed
having children for several years. Even after the birth of her two children and the addition of three step-children, Mary Ann did not give up her political or intellectual commitments; she simply made accommodations for her new status as a wife and a mother.

We know that her husband Thomas Cary shared her commitments to the political struggle for racial equality, since he participated in numerous conventions and organizations. Moreover, some evidence strongly suggests that he supported her feminist ideas and approaches. First, we know that by the time of their marriage Mary Ann's political identity was clearly defined. Second, he facilitated her continued political involvement by taking care of the children while she was away, with assistance from her sister Sarah. Finally, as she continued to travel and lecture, he sent her money whenever he could to defray her expenses (Yee, 1992: 33).

This role reversal must have been extremely unusual then, because it would be unusual even now. The demands of a racist society facilitated this radically different arrangement as well as the widening of Mary Ann's sphere of activity. She was actively struggling for racial equality, and in doing so, challenged sexist ideology. In her unique relationship with her husband the priorities of race superseded the biases of gender. The nature of this

28She gave birth to her daughter Sarah at 33, and to her son Linton at 38.
relationship also supports the contention that public and private spheres can be inclusive locations of activity for men and women.

Like her family life, Mary Ann's political activism forces us to reconceptualize Black women's political participation. Her activism was focused on group survival, integration and acceptance, as well as the transformation of existing structures of oppression. In her struggle against racism her commitment was clear and unwavering. She vehemently rejected slavery in the southern States as well as its racist legacy in the northern States and Canada. She believed in the true spirit of democracy and was always hopeful that Canadian society would ultimately adhere to its principles. With this optimistic vision, she persisted in her struggle for the acceptance and integration of Blacks in Canada.

Her commitment to eradicating systems of domination meant a rejection of exclusionary politics, whether espoused by Blacks or Whites. She believed that separatists were controlled by fear and ignorance. She readily associated with White women, White men, Black men and other Black women as was necessary, but through it all maintained her commitment to self-definition, independence and autonomy.

She readily challenged individuals and organizations she considered detrimental to the elevation of her community. Among other things, this meant she had no
patience for Black women’s political apathy. Moreover, in several editorial commentaries she not only acknowledged Black women’s increased political presence, she very overtly recruited them for political action.

In her relationships with White men like John Scoble, or organizations controlled by White males, like the American Missionary Association, she was forced to deal with issues of gender and race. In doing so she rejected all race and gender expectations. That is, even though White men and Black women were on opposite ends of the social hierarchy, she refused to be silenced. Mary Ann very directly and openly challenged their racist and sexist attitudes and actions. She spoke out about their practice of invalidating the voice of Black women as well as their support of separate and inherently unequal Black settlements.

Similarly, she held Black men accountable for their fundamental reluctance to include Black women in the political discourse for racial equality. Her battles with Henry Bibb are most representative of her willingness to challenge Black men’s sexist socialization. While Black men welcomed and even encouraged Black women in the struggle for racial equality, they wanted to define the rules for their participation. Here again, Mary Ann refused to give up her autonomy, and consistently created avenues to include her voice in the political dialogue. She authored two books, wrote letters, gave lectures, and
helped to create and define the Provincial Freeman.

Class conflict complicated her political rivalry with Henry Bibb, although class takes on distinctive features within a Black context. Traditional class analysis holds two models, status attainment, and class conflict.

In the status attainment model, class sorts our positions in society along a continuum of economic success and social prestige...In the class conflict model, class divides society into two or more groups each of which has vested class interests and contends for control of society (Collins, 1991: 45).

Neither model adequately explains the Black experience. Economic success and social prestige then and now are relative, and often limited to the boundaries of the Black community. Men like Abraham Shadd, Mary Ann's father, may have had influence on the Black community, but their access to and influence in the larger White society was negligible.

Similarly, while class differences conferred different privileges, the internal social relations of the post-emancipation Black community in Canada, were not defined by a struggle for the domination of one Black group by another. Instead, the Black community was struggling as a collective to redefine its power relations with the White community.

Class privilege did account for some of the distinctions between Mary Ann and Henry Bibb. The privilege of a free Black middle class family gave Mary Ann access to a formal education and to people of influence in
her community. But her privilege also denied her experiential access to some of the harsher realities of Black life, so she could afford to be more idealistic. On the other hand, Henry Bibb was first a slave, then a fugitive and finally a self-educated, self-made man with very different experiences and priorities.

Both believed in the need for Black independence but differed radically on their strategy for autonomy; Bibb advocated separatism while Mary Ann favoured integration. While she was optimistic about the potential good among Whites, he had first hand knowledge of their actual evil. Mary Ann failed to show any understanding for this difference in their experience of White society or any tolerance for diversity in political views. Her class bias and his gender bias created a rift that never healed.

Class privilege also had an impact on Mary Ann’s involvement with the Provincial Freeman. Because of her circle of acquaintances, she was able to get the commitment and support of influential men like Samuel Ward to launch the newspaper. Producing and sustaining a newspaper was an impressive accomplishment, especially for a Black woman, because the racist and sexist society in which she lived believed in her inherent intellectual inferiority. Mary Ann took advantage of her unique position and in her writings and speeches challenged the definitions surrounding intellectual discourse.

For Mary Ann, the written and spoken word was not a
luxury. She first transformed her ideas into language and then into more tangible actions. Through the Provincial Freeman, she gave voice to the silenced. She helped to expand the definition of womanhood and of a woman's role. At first she did not openly identify the extent of her involvement with the Provincial Freeman and appeared to be adhering to and endorsing the prevailing rules of a woman's sphere. Even then, however, she was covertly in charge, subverting the dominant assumptions and maintaining control over her self-definition.

The newspaper gave her a forum for provocative and often radical views that offended some, those who could not overcome their narrow construction of the Black woman's identity. Mary Ann did not allow this "painful confluence of gender and race" to silence and make her powerless (Hutton, 1992:78).

When public challenges arose she did not silently disappear; she spoke out and encouraged other women to make writing a priority. However, Mary Ann was not willing to sacrifice the viability of the newspaper for her own personal gain. Her views and actions were not always popular, but as her desire was neither praise nor approval, she unreservedly accepted the consequences. When required she publicly stepped back but never actually gave up her commitment to the paper. She understood the psyche of her community and she worked with it.

The Provincial Freeman did have a positive impact on
the Black community. Information and dialogue which would have otherwise been impossible took place across Canada West and the neighbouring area of the United States. It provided a vehicle for the many voices of protest and self-expression in the community. Furthermore, the paper chronicled both Black Canadian and women’s history with reports which were not sterile or isolated, but were situated in a race-, class- and gender-conscious society. These reports showed a community not constantly defined by White norms, but rather offered discussion on the volatile and complex nature of the Black community. In short, Mary Ann left us new filters through which we can reassess the perspectival truths in Canadian Black and White history, as well mass communication and women’s history.

This thesis has proposed a broader definition for ‘women,’ one which includes women in all their diversity. It has presented a preliminary analysis to situate Mary Ann Shadd in Canadian historiography, since her work has hitherto been denied its true place. I have attempted to remedy this neglect through an examination of the messages of this ‘unknown’ journal, and in doing so to broaden our understanding of this important woman and her contribution to Canadian history.

Mary Ann epitomized the Black feminist philosophy that suggests:

There is always choice, and power to act, no matter how bleak the situation may appear to be. Viewing the world as one in the making raises the
issue of individual responsibility for bringing about change. It also shows that while individual empowerment is key, only collective action can effectively generate lasting social transformation (Collins, 1991: 237).

Her life, writings and political work are proof of her commitment to actualize a humanist vision of community. While the White press plagued the community with charges of inferiority, both the Provincial Freeman and the Voice of the Fugitive strove to uplift the community, revealing a complex group committed to social responsibility. They did not focus on a pathological perspective; Blacks were neither tragic nor inferior.

Mary Ann's message went beyond antislavery messages. She helped to set the agenda for her community by focusing on self-improvement organizations for women, education for youth, and an individual commitment to hard work and temperance. She was troubled by contradictions and vulnerabilities, but she was well-intentioned and consistent in her editorial and political focus.

This study began as an investigation of one woman's story but it does not end there. Like, Mary Ann, I am interested in advancing the process of a 'collective self recovery' for the Canadian Black community. Though victimized by race, class and gender oppression, I, like her share the belief that critical intellectual self-inventory, "is a necessary part of liberation struggle, central to the efforts of all oppressed and/or exploited people who would move from object to subject, who would
decolonize and liberate their minds" (hooks and West, 1991: 150).

Extensive collections of Mary Ann's writing have been preserved and hold a rich and largely untapped legacy of her struggle for self-definition. If we are to continue to break historical silences, we first must be willing to patiently listen to all historical voices and then to take action.
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MASTER'S THESIS AND DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS


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